■ NEWS / A2
Gov't, MILF start new round of talks in KL

■ BUSINESS / B6
Peso hits 3-year high of 51.605 against dollar

Do you have a story to tell about Edsa I? The Inquirer is looking for those untold stories (photos, too) that contributed, no matter how small, to the first People Power in 1986 that so stunned the world and inspired and emboldened people in chains everywhere to break free. The contributions that will be selected by the editors will be used for the Inquirer's special celebration of the 20th anniversary of Edsa I. **Send your contribution, with your address and contact number, not later than Feb. 15 to** kwentongedsa@inquirer.com.ph

Medical tourism plan offers Filipino massage

By Christian V. Esguerra

IN THE FUTURE, THE place to go for a soothing massage will be the nearest nearest you.

The government is set to make spas, health and wellness centers a regular

MEDICAL / A4

email: feedback@inquirer.com.ph

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Tuesday, February 7, 2006 ** Vol. 21 / No. 61 website: www.inq7.net

Exec tells CBCP: Don't demonize mine industry

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

WHILE MINING EXECUTIVES ARE SEEKING A DIALogue with Catholic bishops, an official of the Philippine Mines Safety and Environment Association is attacking the bishops, describing their move to demonize the mining industry as a throwback to the Spanish colonial era when the friars held sway over the fate of the natives (natives).

EXEC TELLS / A11

Willie may be liable as show host–DOJ

Palace: No vendetta on Lopezes

By Armand N. Morano and Norman Bordadora

JUSTICE SECRETARY Raul Gonzalez yesterday said comedian Willie Revillame and organizers of the "Wowowee" show could be held legally liable for the disaster that brought death to 74 people.

Without pinning blame on anyone, the head of the government fact-finding body, Interior Undersecretary Marlou Ceripas, said organizers of events that end in tragedies, like Saturday's game show extravaganza, could be held liable for "criminal negligence."

Revillame declined to comment on Gonzalez's statement, saying he needed to talk to ABS-CBN first. But he told the Inquirer that he was merely the game show's host. (See stories on Page A8 and A17.)

In a statement, the television network said: "As of now, ABS-CBN is not aware of any cases that have been filed by any of the victims or their families. Should there be any, this will not detract the network from attending to the needs of those affected."

Malacañang stressed that the government probe should not be taken as payback against the Lopez-owned network giant, which has been critical of the administration of late.

"No, not at all, not at all," Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita said.

Gonzalez formed a group of prosecutors headed by Senior State Prosecutor Leo Dacera to evaluate the findings of the Cortez panel before the possible filing of legal action against those

VILLAR / A6

MONTH OF HEARTS. A mourner makes an offering for those killed in the stampede. The message on the pillow beside her shows the irony of it all.

Bunye: Don't blame stampede on GMA

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr., Christine O. Avendaño and Luige A. del Puerto

MALACAÑANG YESTERDAY DECried what it said were efforts by some sectors to turn the tragedy of people being trampled to death during a game show extravaganza into a politically charged

"Likewise, we appeal to all parties to refrain from blame-tossing and wait for the official results of the investigations."

Bunye said the objective of the investigation was not only to identify those liable but also to come up with measures to prevent a similar incident.

"Saying that this event is a mirror of poverty is carrying it too far," Executive Secretary Edwardo Ermita said. "There is a tragedy because of the program."

Ermita added: "If ever there is a stampede during the feast of the Black Nazarene or during Sinulog, would you blame the

BUNYE / A6

Cabinet appointees face rough sailing at CA

By Christine O. Avendaño, Gil C. Cabacungan Jr., Philip C. Tubeza and Michael Lim Ubac

MALACAÑANG YESTERDAY named former Rep. Eduardo Antonio Nachura the chief presidential legal counsel amid criticism in the Senate of some of her choices in the latest Cabinet shake-up.

"Nobody's perfect," said Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita. "The President is not King Solomon but she is trying to be Solomon. There will always be questions, but let's see how they perform first."

The President earlier appointed Rep. Ronaldo Puno as secretary of the Department of the Interior and Local Government and Rep. Rolando Andaya as secretary of the Department of Budget and Management while transferring her longtime ally Angelo Reyes to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources from the DILG.

Ermita said it was only coincidental that the new faces in Ms Arroyo's Cabinet were lawmakers, stressing that it was the President's prerogative to pick those who were loyal to her.

Puno used to be DILG secretary in the Estrada administration and had served every government in various capacities since the Marcos dictatorship.

Andaya's experience as chair of the House committee on appropriations will serve him well as budget secretary, Ermita said.

He said Reyes had acquitted himself well in his numerous posts under the Arroyo administration.

When reminded that the Cabinet revamp was far from the government of reconciliation promised by President Arroyo last year, Ermita said Malacañang was considering opposition leaders for Cabinet posts.

"We tapped Mike Romero, one

CABINET / A11

GMA allies twit 'meeting of strange bedfellows'

By Cynthia D. Balana and Norman Bordadora

ALLIES OF PRESIDENT MACAPAgal-Arroyo yesterday described an unprecedented weekend gathering of opposition leaders as a meeting of strange bedfellows with an impossible dream.

Even so, former President Corazon Aquino and Senate President Franklin Drilon said there was nothing political about Sunday's event—a thanksgiving Mass at the San Juan Medical Center where ex-President Joseph Estrada had undergone corrective eye surgery.

"I just wanted to pray for (Estrada's) successful operation and victims of the tragedy," said Aquino, referring to the deadly stampede that occurred among fans of the popular noontime game show "Wowowee." (See *banner* story.)

"It was a time for prayers, we did not talk politics," said Drilon.

But Estrada said, "Magkasundo kaming magtulungan para sa kabutihan ng bayan (We agreed to cooperate for the good of the nation)." He did not elaborate.

Sunday marked the first time that Aquino, Estrada, Drilon and Senate Blues, widow of the late movie actor and unsuccessful presidential candidate Fernando Poe Jr., came together since they joined mounting calls in July for the resignation of Ms Arroyo over charges that the 58-year-old President stole the 2004 election. Ms Arroyo has denied the charges.

The thanksgiving Mass was also attended by other opposition stalwarts, including Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay, United Opposition spokesperson Jejomar Binay

GMA ALLIES / A13

Research volunteers await arrival of humpback whales

FOR THOSE WHO SEE THE ocean as a dark abyss ready to suck them into its depths, it must take something big to encourage them to spend an entire summer bobbing between the Pacific Ocean and the South China Sea.

But Gabriel Tinoco, a 33-year-old veterinarian, is took something very big indeed—one of the largest animals on the planet—the humpback whale (Balyena in Tagalog).

Inspired by tales from fellow vet students at the University of the Philippines, Tinoco found himself in 2005 joining a small team of volunteers from World Wildlife Fund-Philippines to collect data on a recently discovered population of humpbacks in the waters off northern Luzon.

Conducted during the summer when the whales visit the region to breed and give birth, the hands-on research requires volunteers to spend most of the two months of the program afloat—a challenging proposition for city slickers.

"Being near a body of water made me uncomfortable," says Tinoco. "But the thought of being in the middle of the ocean was frightening."

In spite of his initial reservations, Tinoco loudly describes experiencing a feeling of relief when a sleek, dark dorsal fin lumbered

AN ADULT humpback whale can weigh 25 to 40 tons

RESEARCH / A11

ONE OF THE BOYS
President Arroyo visits troops in Tarlac after their clashes with communist rebels. She is flanked by Armed Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Generoso Senga (on her left) and regional commander Gen. Renato Tolentino (on her right).

WEATHER FORECAST

Second FRONTPAGE

Cop chiefs fired after NPA raid

By Luigi A. del Puerto and Bert Pascua
PDI Mindanao Bureau

THE PHILIPPINE NATIONAL POLICE FIRED A provincial commander and a municipal police chief yesterday, one day after a band of New People's Army guerrillas, using a town mayor they had earlier abducted as a decoy, raided the police station in the town of Lingig and carried off 11 M16 assault rifles, several pistols and hand grenades, officials said.

The officials said not a single shot was fired during Sunday's raid and that Lingig Mayor Roberto Lana, his body guards and six policemen were left unharmed by the rebels, who escaped to the mayor's Toyota Land Cruiser and Superdilimen vans.

By their failure to put up a defense, PNP Director General Arturo Lomibao ordered the relief of Senior Supt. Administer Jesus Suarez del Sur PNP chief, and Lingig Police chief Inspector Evelyn Privaldini, and PNP spokesman Chief Supt. Leopoldo Bataoil.

"The senior police force of Lingig will undergo retraining and investigation, and will be replaced by personnel from the Provincial Mobile Group," Bataoil said on Monday.

Meanwhile, at least three soldiers were wounded yesterday in a clash with the fleeing rebels, who numbered between 40 and 50, according to the police in Tandag, provincial capital of Surigao del Sur, who declined details of the encounter were immediately available.

Lingig is about 180 km south of Tandag.

Reports were not clear as to whether the mayor was a hostage or accomplice during the flight in a second 2-ton, Sunday.

But Lt. Col. Francisco Gonzalez, spokesman of the Army's 4th Infantry Division based in Cagayan de Oro City, said the rebels marched Lana from his residence.

Senior Supt. Edgar Aglasan, deputy regional police director for administration in the Caraga region, said policemen manning the station "thought it was an inspection led by the mayor, so they let their guard down."

The ranking of the police officers came only a week after Lomibao, meeting in a series of relief visits on police stations, warned commanders he would fire them if they failed to fight off rebel forces during raids.

Bataoil told reporters that Lomibao had instructed police commanders to "anticipate enemy raids, attacks, harassments, and other terror activities."

"He is deeply concerned over their readiness and initiative to fight insurgency," Bataoil said.

Lomibao said late last month that police should not "be sitting ducks in police stations, (waiting) for our men to be attacked" and he wanted the PNP to be more active in anti-insurgency operations because of the frequency and success of rebel raids.

"Policemen are expected to operate against the insurgents and not wait for the Armed Forces to operate against the insurgents," he had said.

In a separate attack, about 80 guerrillas opened fire on an Army detachment in North Cotabato's Matalam town Saturday, but soldiers and allied militiamen fought back, wounding an undetermined number of rebels and forcing them to withdraw, Army Col. Eugenio Palmones said.

Soldiers in military outposts in the province has been tightened because of information the rebels planned more attacks, he said. With reports from Franklin A. Caliquid, PDI Mindanao Bureau and AP

AFTER A FOUR-DAY visit, Indian President Abdul Kalam (left) farewell the country he called "an ancient and great nation." Seeing him off at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport is Vice President Noli de Castro. KOOR-PHOTO

Indian president leaves after Congress speech

By Michael Lim Ubac and Nikko Dizon

INDIAN PRESIDENT ABDUL KALAM LEFT yesterday after noon, capping a four-day state visit expected to foster cooperation in defense, counter-terrorism, trade and tourism.

In a well-applauded address at the joint session of Congress yesterday, Kalam yesterday called the Philippines "an ancient and great nation" whose adherence to the values of freedom isn't like today "could cross our seas ahead to greater prosperity and happiness for our people."

The Indian president talked about eliminating poverty and modernizing the electoral system in the country, making available to Filipinos cheap pharmaceutical products from India and increasing trade between the two countries to $2 billion (P104 billion) in the next three years.

He also outlined the "Indo-Philippine Go operation road map," to "initiate mode coop eration" in eight areas of development to "align their relations between us."

Prior to his address, Speaker Jose de Venecia and Senate President Franklin Drilon entertained the Indian President the Congressional Medal of Achievement for leading the "richest tradition of the world's biggest democracy with a population of over one billion."

The Speaker described India as "the largest democracy on earth."

In his 22-minute speech, Kalam said his large nation was going through a "major challenge of uplifting 260 million people who are now below poverty line."

In a statement which resonated with Filipinos, Kalam said Indians, too, "need habitat, work with reasonable income, food, speedy access to health care, education and finally a good life and hope for a better future."

Gov't, MILF start new round of talks in KL

KUALA LUMPUR — REPRESENTATIVES OF the Philippine government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front met for peace talks resumed ground in Malaysia yesterday as both sides sought to end a 40-year conflict that has killed more than 120,000 people.

A peace deal for Muslim areas in the south of the country home to Catholic Philippines is key to alleviating poverty, opening up more mining lands and reassuring investors about a nation seen as a weak link in the war against terrorism.

A truce between the government and MILF has held since July 2003. The previous round of talks ended last September in Port Dickson, a Malaysian resort town, with a commitment on the key issue of ancestral domain, or areas recognized as part of a Muslim homeland.

But there has so far been little progress on other issues such as the form of government for the homeland and the post-conflict future of the MILF's 11,000 guerrillas.

"It's work in progress," Jesus Dureza, Philippine presidential adviser on the peace process, said Reuters yesterday after the two-day talks began with a round of technical meetings.

A full negotiation panel, including Dureza and Agnman Sultan Secretary Nasser Pangandaman, met on Monday.

"We hope this will be another movement forward because ancestral domain is a crucial issue to this negotiation," Dureza said. He declined to elaborate.

The MILF claims a swathe of mainly Muslim areas on Mindanao, which it says is the ancestral homeland of the Moro people. The matter is complicated by a push by the government to open the region's foreign mining firms.

The Philippines is home to three rebel Muslim-rebel groups and a communist insurgency. Several dozen foreign militants are believed to be in Mindanao.

MILF's chief negotiator, Mohagher Iqbal, told Reuters last month that the Philippine government and the rebels were in the home stretch of talks, having agreed to 85 percent of the agenda.

Rebut Joining Dureza, Dureza told reporters the talks' next report process for the second domain was "the most complicated issue" and would be at the heart of the Kuala Lumpur talks. Reuters, with a report from Nikko Dizon

ASIA INTERNATIONAL AUCTIONEERS, INC.
Your Best Source of Quality Machinery in Asia

AIA

Trucks & Equipment
4-DAY PUBLIC AUCTION
FEB. 22, 23, 24 & 25, 2006
(Wednesday, Thursday, Friday & Saturday)
8am Starts at 8:00 a.m.
DON'T MISS THE BIGGEST AUCTION OF THE YEAR!
Inspection Dates:
Feb. 18, 19, 20 & 21
(Saturday, Sunday, Monday & Tuesday)

GETTING THE MACHINE YOU NEED HAS NEVER BEEN THIS EASY!

Inquiries & Registration Online via: http://www.asia-intl-auctioneers.com AUCTION STYLE: PARAGON

Dynamite discovery: It's just like buying vinegar

By Luige A. del Puerto and Jocelyn R. Uy

IN A TOWN NORTH OF METRO MANILA known for rock quarrying, obtaining dynamite is as easy as buying vinegar from the corner store.

"It's that easy. It's just like buying vinegar," remarked one police officer after the Anti-Terrorist Task Group (ATTG) of the Regional Intelligence and Investigation Division (RIID) seized some 500 sticks of dynamite and nine kilos of ammonium nitrate in two quarrying facilities over the weekend.

The explosives could easily bring down a three-story building, bomb experts said.

On Saturday, police arrested a man and a woman after only the explosives in a policeman posing as a fisherman. The police, however, were quick to clarify that Manuel Ruiz, 58, and Josephine Arriquiz, 46, were not terrorists but civilians involved in quarrying in the town.

But they had no license to sell or stockpile the explosives, police said.

"Our men went to the market in Bocaue's Bigte, and asked the people where to get dynamites. The people pointed to the house of Tony Ruiz (Manuel Ruiz)," said Supt. Wyeth Ingkiriotarso of the ATTG.

"Mr. Ruiz, we negotiated to buy two sticks, and then we said we'd buy more the next day. It was that easy, which was worrisome," Ingkiriotarso said.

But was selling the dynamite – with fuse, cord and blasting cap – an RIID catch, the police said.

After his arrest, Ruiz led police in Arriquiz's lab alleged supplier, who also agreed to sell them some dynamite.

All told, seized from Ruiz's and Arriquiz's houses were about nine kilos of ammonium nitrate, 100 sticks of dynamite, 54 feet of blasting fuse, 110 blasting caps and about 500 meters of detonating cord.

The police acted on information provided by a 44-year-old man who was caught at a checkpoint in Bocaue after two bomb-like dynamite sticks in his backpack.

The man claimed he trashed for a firm that was building a fish pond in Antipolo City – a claim confirmed by the police.

Metro Manila police chief Director Vidal Querol lamented how easy it was to get hold of deadly materials that could fall into the wrong hands.

"It is not at all impossible that given the ease with which anyone can buy explosives at anytime, that at some time, these explosives and materials [could] be used to make improvised bombs that could fall into the hands of terrorists," Querol said in a statement.

The police have found that the number of the explosives, which were said to have been imported from Malaysia, but refused to identify the persons at this time.

The police are checking whether the source is authorized to import, sell and stockpile the explosive materials.

NBI chief Reuben Sapi. Felipe Ricio Jr. told the heavens yesterday that although the dynamite was not pelleted spirals, the suspects were well-known for their wares.

"These vendors do not display their illegal wares out on the streets. They depend mostly on word of mouth. They are well-known in the barangay," Rojas said.

SC rejects tax perks for Clark investors

CLARK SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONE – THE Supreme Court has denied the motion for reconsideration filed by the Bases Conversion Development Authority and the Clark Development Corp. to regain tax incentives for some 400 investors in the zone.

The ruling, which was handed down on Dec. 19, 2005, was received here on Friday, CDC president and chief executive officer Honesto Ng told reporters on yesterday.

The high court denied the motion because the state-owned base conversion bodies failed to present substantial arguments to warrant a reversal of the July 29, 2005 decision that stripped investors of the privilege in Clark but upheld it in the case of those doing business in the Subic Bay Freeport Zone in Bataan and Zambales.

Ng said the CDC would file another appeal in 15 days. Tonelle Ompoa, PDI Circle of Lucas Dead

Fil-Am pilot shot down in Iraq given hero's burial today

By Veli Contreras

A FILIPINO-AMERICAN ARMY scout helicopter pilot who was killed in action over Iraq last month will have a hero's burial today once his remains arrive in Honolulu.

He will also receive posthumous awards and full military honors from Washington D.C. The US Embassy in Manila yesterday said Chief Warrant Officer Ilario Gurcia, 34, will be awarded the Bronze Star, the fourth highest US military award for gallantry in action; the Purple Heart Medal, and the Air Medal.

Reported as his hometown on US Big Sur, Richard Hills, commanding general of Special Operations Command, Pacific, honor guards from the 8th Army Korea, and US Charge d'Affaires Paul Jones.

"We are grateful as this nation bestows its most hearts a little heartfelt," Gurcia's father Rosendo said in Filipino of the posthumous honors, when reached on the phone yesterday.

"He believes he died for something good," he added.

The last military rites remains scheduled Thursday from Tripler Army Medical Center in Honolulu, Hawaii, will be buried at Fort Shafter, Honolulu, Hawaii.

The order has been held in the family residence in Barangay Pangdan, Olongapo, Bataan.

"As these medals demonstrate, his bravery in the field, professional aviation skills and devotion to his adopted country will always be remembered. Chief Garcia made the ultimate sacrifice so that his fellow men can live in peace and freedom," the embassy said in a statement.

Sentenced in 1944, the Bronze Star is awarded to any person serving in any capacity in or with the US military for heroic achievement or action against an enemy of the US or a foreign force, or while serving in friendly foreign forces in a conflict in which the US is not a belligerent party.

The Purple Heart is an award given in the name of the President of the United States to any American military or civilian personnel who has been killed or wounded in any action against an enemy of the US.

The Air Medal is awarded to pilots who have distinguished themselves in aerial flight.

Garcia died along with his co-pilot in a crash after their Apache helicopter gunship was shot down by a surface-to-air missile on the morning of Jan. 16 in Taji, Iraq.

WHAT'S SO FUNNY!
House Speaker Jose de Venecia and Senate President Franklin M. Drilon exchange jokes waiting for Indian President Abdul Kalam's arrival at the Batasan Pambansa, in a well-applauded address of the joint session of Congress yesterday. Kalam talked about eliminating poverty and modernizing the electoral system.

Palace says strong peso will silence gov't critics

By Christine D. Avendaño

MALACAÑANG YESTERDAY EXPRESSED elation over the continued strength of the peso against the dollar and said the strong peso would eventually silence the government's critics.

The peso hit 51.75 per dollar on Monday, its strongest level since September 2002, gaining over 2.5 percent in the last two weeks, the story on Business, Page B6.

"The economy's reality-check years has been fueled by improvements to the fiscal deficit. Expectations this month's increase in the sales tax will fetch the government higher revenues and raise the channel for an upgrade in the country's rating have also boosted the currency.

"The opposition can howl to all they want but they know the rallying pain represents a sweeping economy," Presidential Political Adviser Gabriel Claudio said in a text message.

"Eventually it is the peso that will silence detractors of the government and their destructive type of politics."

Claudio said the future was shaped by the continued gaining of the peso against the dollar.

While he said the Palace expects government critics to continue to be cynical about the performance of the peso, the people should realize that the strong peso means no Chavez would able to lick the budget deficit and save millions of pesos for debt servicing.

"Therefore millions of jobs more, infrastructure, education, health and social services," Claudio said.

It will also promote a robust environment for local and foreign investments and according to Claudio this would mean the creation of more jobs for more Filipinos.

With a report from Reuters

Missing yacht found off Mindoro

By Lolita Salamatin

A YACHT CARRYING six tourists and two Filipinos was found yesterday morning, four days after it went missing on its way to Apo Reef in Mindoro.

A Philippine Coast Guard helicopter spotted the MK Wave some 625 nautical miles off Lubang Island.

PCG spokesperson Lt. Commander Joseph Cayme said in three messengers, identified as Australian Tony Smith, 64, Mr Fil. Spine with Lourdes Mamangun, 49, and wife Mangun, 50, did not appear to be harmed.

Cayme said the PCG's search and rescue vessel left Manila yesterday morning and was expected to reach the yacht's location late in the afternoon.

The MK Wave left Puerto Galera in Mindoro last Saturday afternoon for a yacht race but suffered engine trouble, Cayme said.

It was first reported missing by the Coast Guard's wife, a.

Rescue efforts had been hampered by bad weather.

WAS MONEY USED IN '04 POLLS?

'Special audit' of Marcos funds sought

By Philip C. Tubeza

SENATE PRESIDENT FRANKLIN Drilon yesterday sought a "special audit" of the P35-billion in Marcos funds deposits, some of which may have been spent in the runup to the May 2004 presidential elections.

The idea: Department of Budget and Management records showed P1.6 billion of the funds were released shortly before the polls.

Drilon asked Commissioner Antonio Carpio to conduct a special audit in order to find out if the Arroyo administration had violated the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law (CARL) when it used part of the Marcos funds in its farm input program during the 2004 election campaign.

The administration released P644 million of the Marcos funds months before the May 2004 elections to buy seeds and fertilizer for the Ginintuang Masaganang Ani (GMA) hybrid rice program of the government.

But on top of the P644 million, the administration also took from the Marcos funds P506 million for irrigation projects and P900 million for farm-to-market roads, Drilon said.

"I am asking Commissioner Carpio to conduct the

Gov't told to return cash, gems seized 20 years ago

By Nelson F. Flores

THE SANDIGANBAYAN HAS ORDERED THE Presidential Commission on Good Government and the Department of Budget and Management to return immediately the cash and jewelry they seized 20 years ago from the alleged mistress of the Army commanding general during the Marcos regime.

In a five-page resolution promulgated on Jan. 25, the antigraft court's First Division ordered the return of Elizabeth Dimaano's assets which included cash of P5.07 million and $191,000 and vast array of jewelry after the Supreme Court dismissed in July 24, 2002 the cases filed against her and Gen. Josephus Ramas.

The divisional court also freed Ramas and Dimaano challenged the PCGG's authority to file forfeiture cases before the high court.

The SC held that the PCGG had overstepped its mandate in filing the cases.

Records showed the government filed graft and forfeiture cases against Ramas and Dimaano in 1986 to recover alleged ill-gotten wealth they supposedly acquired through their close association with Marcos.

In March 2005, the Sandiganbayan ordered the return of the cash and jewelry seized from Dimaano.

Government lawyers filed a motion for reconsideration but were overruled in a resolution dated Aug. 1, 2005.

Dimaano then went to the Bureau of Treasury to claim her assets but was told the money had been transferred to the Philippine National Bank because the old bills had been demonetized.

Due to some confusion in the transfer of the money, Dimaano's heads rushed up to the government's General Fund.

Accordingly, the Bureau of Treasury said it would not be able to release the money without clearance from the PCGG.

Willie may be liable as show host–DOJ

responsible for the disaster.

"I think we have a strong enough case. Enough to proof of liability," he said, adding that the Department of Justice will soon start ordering filing a class suit against the organizers but that this would be done only if a victim or the families of those killed would initiate the filing of a case.

Proximate cause

As for Bevilacqua, Gonzalez said it did not help that the show's organizers had admitted that the comedian had taken the "responsibility of getting the prizes, the sponsors, etc." for the show.

"He may well have (a liability) because there is a main supplier, one of the principle of proximate cause. What is the proximate cause of the stampede? It was because there was a show like that ... and eventually the prizes," he said.

"The gathering itself is the proximate cause, that's where the negligence of organizers will come in," he said.

Legally, a proximate cause is defined as that which, in the natural and ordinary sequence of events, unbroken by new and independent causes, produces the event which would otherwise not have occurred.

He said the producers or organizers should have prepared for all eventualities.

Primary responsibility

According to Gonzalez, producers of the games shows would have charges of reckless imprudence resulting in multiple homicide, multiple injury and damage, but he declined to pinpoint the extent of the liability pending the result of the fact-finding inquiry.

Reckless imprudence is punishable by six months and one day to six years and one day at its minimum, to six years to 12 years imprisonment, if the may also be fined by the court.

Asked who had primary responsibility for the stampede, Gonzalez replied: "It, the owner, you'd think first of the organizers. Who are the ones who organized and who have control over the show? If they are the proximate cause, they should be held liable."

"In situations of this nature, where people are expected to gather, you can say 500 or 5,000 people will be attending, you have to consider the capacity (of the venue). ABS-CBN should have anticipated (the crowd). They have been planning this event for one week or so," he added.

Gonzalez said the organizers acted in "bad faith" because they could have held the show in a bigger venue to accommodate their fan audience or they could have told people that they could no longer be allowed in.

Unruly crowd

As for those who blamed the unruly crowd for the stampede, he said: "That is not an excuse ... because ABS-CBN assumed the responsibility (for) crowd control within the perimeter which was given to them by the permit given by the local government."

Addressing the question of negligence, Casper said, "If you're somebody responsible (over a particular event) and you fail to act on certain precautionary measures, or you fail to use your foresight to prevent (an accident from happening), that can be a basis for criminal negligence."

However, Casper would not say if the organizers were guilty of violating ordinances after stating that interested would prejudge the DOJ's part of the probe.

"That would be prejudging the prosecutors of the DOJ," he said.

'We are not exploiting people's poverty'

By Bayani San Diego Jr.
Entertainment

"I AM JUST A TV HOST."

That spoke comedian Willie Revillame when asked about the government probe into last weekend's deadly stampede that killed 79 people scrambling to get inside the Philpoorts Arena in Bunawan, Davao to watch the popular game show "Wowowowee."

The probe team is expected to submit its findings to Malacañang today.

In phone interviews on Tuesday and yesterday, Revillame said he could not understand the people who pinned the blame on him and ABS-CBN.

"I don't bother with criticisms," he said in Filipino. "I want to give more importance to the people who were hurt or who lost loved ones. Nothing will happen if I listen to the negative. I just wish these critics will think of the victims instead."

He said he also couldn't fathom comments that game shows encouraged a "culture of mendicancy" and made poor people dependent on dole-outs.

"We are not exploiting people's poverty," Revillame insisted. "This is reality. We never told the people to leave."

"What do they want us to do? Tell the country's poor people to do things instead? To work? In our own little way, we are helping the government. Every day, jobless Filipinos have made a career out of joining our game shows. Is it a sin to give people hope? Is it a crime to give away P1 million? Is it wrong to raffle off a house and lot?"

He corrected conflicting reports on the prizes at stake for the show's first anniversary.

"Yes, it's true that raffle tickets were to be given to the first 300 people," he said. "But 300 computer would be volumes than the thick numbers in the drawer than day. It's just not that they went in a rush to get tickets."

The prizes

He admitted that he had worked hard to solicit the prizes worth P5 million to each raffle winner and lot for an audience member and a home patient, a jeepney and three motorcabs.

"I approached different companies for the additional prizes like Wi. Pesos (for the house patient's cash prize and jeepney), Globe Kaake (for the house and lot) and Black Beauty Shampoo (for the motorcabs)," he said. "We also raised P3,000 from TFC (The Filipino Channel) subscribers, which was to be converted to pesos. He planned to raffle off P20,000 to different audience members that day."

Revillame added: "It's not true that the first 50 audience members were assured of P50,000. There would still be a raffle to be held throughout the show. Different people helped and pooled their resources to make this anniversary show a success."

A devastated comedian

Instead of a celebration, the anniversary show turned into a nightmare, said Revillame.

"Devastated" was how friend and former manager Wyngard Tracy described Revillame.

When he guested on another ABS-CBN show, "The Buzz," a day after the incident, the usually jolly and gregarious Revillame had been turned into a subdued figure.

He even kissed that he might not have the strength to continue hosting the game shows.

He still searched deaken when he spoke to reporters.

"I am really depressed," he said. "Until now, what happened has yet to sink in. I keep asking myself: Is this real? Why did it happen? I can't face people. But life must go on. Right now, I want to concentrate on the victims. See the show."

74 dreamers

He said he was directing the entire week to the victims' families.

"I want to visit the families of the 74 people who died," he said. "My sister told them the 74 dreamers. I will try to give all of them. I might even go to Iloilo, Cagayan de Oro and other provinces."

That's why he is taking a one-week leave from his hosting chores on the show, he said.

"I cannot think my feelings," he said. "I cannot concentrate people every day when, deep in my heart, I am not happy."

So, he is not resigning from the show, he said.

"It's just one week, but I might extend my vacation, depending on how I feel."

He said his bosses at ABS-CBN assured him that he could take his time to recover.

"They told me we should talk first, that I might need counseling or psychiatrist," he said to avoid anything carefully that my priority right now is to spend time with the families."

Bunye: Don't blame stampede on GMA

Church and the government for poverty? How come during such big open events, such as the inauguration of El Shaddai, there thousands attend, they are properly managed by their leaders? Nothing happens like that."

"We would like to remind the people not to carry the issue too far," he added.

On the appointment of Antipolo Rep. Rodolfo Fuma to the Department of the Interior and Local Government, Bunye said Puno would take over the post only after the DILG had completed its probe of the Wowowee" tragedy.

Son of Puno's brothers are top executives of ABS-CBN.

Bizarre side

The stampede revealed what a police officer said was a "bizarre side" of the Filipino people.

Director Vidal Quevedi, chief of the National Capital Region Police Office, said that an hour after the deadly stampede, he saw hundreds of people still wanting to get into the venue, even though they could see the bodies of their fellow victims still.

"The dead were there, some 20 of them, lined up on one side of the street. There were also about 18 bodies (still) in coffins, but the people still did not want to go home. It was bizarre," Quevedi said.

"They were unnerved and unsatisfied," he added.

"(All) my friends, have some water," Rosalina Morales, 51, yells as she sprinkles water and hands noodles at the site where some of her friends died during Saturday's stampede outside the Philpoorts Arena. (INQUIRER)

At one point, Quezol did tell the people to go home.

But they held up their hands, showed him their tickets, and protested, he said.

"I told them to go home, that the prizes had been canceled. They said, 'No, we want', we have tickets.'"

"More than 1?0 people are dead, and they were still hanging on to their tickets," he said.

While Quezol could not offer an answer as to why the people wanted the show so go on despite the tragedy, he surmised that it was the chance to win some money which made them want that very.

He likened the show to a pilgrimage, and the people the pilgrims. Once they had started on their destination, it would have been very difficult to turn them away.

A Catholic Church group said the stampede only showed the "great disparity of our publicly professed macroeconomic success vis-a-vis the plight of our poor Filipino compatriots."

"We need to get our act together in addressing this concern lest we see that event to occur once again," said the Parish Pastoral Council for Responsible Voting (PPCRV), the church poll watchdog's mantle tag of volunteers unfortunate.

Its board of advisers include Archbishops Gaudencio Rosales of Manila and Leonardo Legaspi of Caceres, and Bishops Teodoro Bacani, Deogracias Iniguez, Ednardo Reyes and Jesse Mercado. Rith a report from Christine Estopuya

350 lose jobs daily, says group

By Marcho S. Rivera

AROUND 350 FILIPINOS LOSE THEIR jobs everyday, adding to the more than 2.6 million the government says are already unemployed. Some 250 of these people are breadwinners and more than two-million children aged five and below are malnourished.

The urban poor group Kalipunan ng Damayang Mahihirap (Kadamay) yesterday came out with the statistics to show that overwhelming majority that drove thousands of people to the Philippine Arena (formerly Ulira) on Saturday to watch a televised game show that turned into a massive tragedy.

Kadamay said that up to 73,824 families had lost their homes in demolitions and five whose names remained empty-rice or unemployed.

About 14,000 residents all over the metropolis have either been driven out of their homes or had their walls demolished by the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority, the group claimed.

Kadamay said that 350 people are laid off from work daily, citing a study by the Ecumenical Institute for Labor Education and Research. It claimed the unemployed population stood at 4.8 million.

The National Statistics Office placed the unemployment figure at 2.6 million, and the number of malnourished Filipino children below five years old at 2.1 million.

Medical tourism plan offers Filipino massage

Some of major hospitals in Metro Manila to have more foreigners to its medical tourism program.

A 2,500-square-meter complex at the East Avenue Medical Center is scheduled be a health to house a new business for Filipino Massage, as well as a health and wellness center, by October, according to Health Undersecretary Jade del Rosario.

The matrons will be the main facility promoting indigenous Filipino massage therapies to both local and foreign patients. The center will highlight traditional and alternative health care, such as herbal medicine, naturopathy and chiropractic medicine.

Later on, Del Rosario said, other government hospitals would house similar institutes and centers under the medical tourism program. Private hospitals would also be encouraged to follow suit, he said.

"The goal is to market our care, brand of health care," he told the Inquirer in an interview.

The construction of the new centers will be another strategy in the promising local medical tourism program from which the government is expecting to earn P300 million (P 15.4 billion) in its maiden year.

Del Rosario said industry leaders, like India and Thailand, that began their respective programs in the late 1990s, recorded their highest annual revenue of $600 million ($31.2 billion) only last year.

"The prospects are really promising for the Philippines," he said, noting Filipino health professionals' expertise and good command of the English language.

Part of the program is an aggressive marketing of the Filipino labor (massage) primarily using virgin coconut oil, he said.

Indigenous massage

On April 18-19, the government will hold the Philippine Indigenous Massage Festival at the Manila Pavilion Hotel, showcasing nine indigenous techniques that represent Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao.

Participants will be selected from regional competitions initiated by the DOH. Del Rosario said.

Representatives of each group would then be tapped as instructors of people seeking jobs at the planned government spas and wellness centers in hospitals, he said.

Del Rosario said the different forms of indigenous massage and their practitioners would subscribe to a manual and code of ethics for hilot and herbolarya (herbologist) which would be developed during the festival.

Philippine Society of Hypertension & Philippine Lipid Society
Joint 11th Annual Convention

"Bridging the Gap Between the Science and Clinical Practice in the Management of Hypertension and Dyslipidemia"

February 9 - 11, 2006
EDSA Shangri-La Hotel, Mandaluyong City

Experts tackle clinical application of new advances in hypertension and dyslipidemia

Antonio S. Abalajon, MD
President
Philippine Society of Hypertension

Mary Anne M. Lim-Abraham, MD
President
Philippine Lipid Society

Esperanza I. Cabral, MD
Overall Chairperson
11th Joint PSH-PLS Convention

The problem posed by hypertension and dyslipidemia are getting bigger and more complex, requiring a holistic and comprehensive approach. New developments can help medical professionals in a more effective effort to manage, control and prevent them risk factors.

Medical experts from various specialties will hold two symposiums to lay out pertinent and substantial guidelines in dyslipidemia, which are the major risk factor that cause heart attacks and strokes in the country. This will be the major focus of discussions during the 11th Joint Annual Convention of the Philippine Society of Hypertension (PSH) and Philippine Lipid Society (PLS).

The convention is organized in cooperation with 22 of the country's respected and scientific societies/associations/institutions/ associations.

The convention includes lectures and discussions on the latest advances in the management of hypertension and dyslipidemia and its prevention. The scientific program consists of three plenary lectures, 5 simultaneous symposia, 10 round the lunch and dinner symposia, a panel discussion on the metabolic syndrome, a pro-convention workshop on essential hypertension and several others which all practicing doctors should know, and as demanded by forum.

Original and unpublished research works on hypertension and dyslipidemia, some of which have been supported by the PSH and PLS, will be presented in poster sessions daily.

More than 10 lectures by the country's leading experts in hypertension, dyslipidemia and the metabolic syndrome will be delivered in what promises to be a very informative meeting of the country's medical practitioners and healthcare professionals who treat patients with hypertension and dyslipidemia.

Dr. Antonio S. Abalajon, PSH president and Dr. Mary Anne Lim-Abraham, PLS president, said the problems posed by hypertension and dyslipidemia are getting bigger and more complex. They recommend that the best way to address the problem is through a holistic and comprehensive approach.

The Esperanza I. Cabral, overall chairperson of the upcoming convention, said there are numerous developments and advances in the fields of hypertension and lipidology that can help medical professionals in the effort to manage, control and prevent hypertension and dyslipidemia.

For convention inquiries and registration, interested physicians and healthcare professionals may call the PSH/ PLS Secretariat at 415-1958 or 687-7071. Registration on-site will be accommodated but delegates are advised to register beforehand to avoid the long queue in opening day.

Ensure health, well-being and empower the people-Pres. GMA

Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo
President
Republic of the Philippines

Francisco T. Duque III, MD, MSC
Secretary of Health
Department of Health

Marianito G. Llamas, MD
President
Philippine Medical Association

President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo has called for the Philippine Society of Hypertension and Philippine Lipid Society to support her goal to give the less fortunate unfettered access to quality health and medical care.

"We, as a country, must start with the aging of our people, we are empowering them to be productive and efficient contributors to 'social building'," the president stated in her message to the PSH / PLS.

President Arroyo added that what we have done to benefit our senior citizens by the past years, we are still looking forward to do more and invest more to safeguard our people's health "by doing so, we would create a healthier society, and as a result, economic growth, as well as good governance will follow."

Health secretary Francisco T. Duque, MD and PSH president Antonio S. Abalajon, MD, has also joined President Arroyo in making a congratulatory message to the PSH/PLS.

"I commend both your organizations for the noble purpose of continuously educating and informing the public through scientific sessions and research which greatly improve the treatment and management of various diseases in the country," Secretary Duque said. He has also extended the members of the PSH / PLS as well with the health sector to do its or account in the country's health system.

Dr. Llamas has commended the individual interest and collaboration with the PSH and PLS have fostered to carry out projects which address the problem of hypertension and dyslipidemia, including research studies and logs. "Sustaining that will be the growth and development of healthcare, your organizations are bringing to new knowledge that can be shared with colleagues in improving their practice in order to educate these lifestyle-related diseases of fueling our condemnation," Dr. Llamas said.

Aiming beyond numbers, visceral fat and CVD prevention in women

Three pioneer lectures is to be delivered by three of the country's leaders in nutrition on the subject with emphasis on patient issues in hypertension and dyslipidemia.

Dr. Ramon Dimaguila is a professor in Medicine and Cardiology at the UERM and an immediate officer of the Philippine Society of Hypertension, will present his dissertation entitled "Hypertension and Dyslipidemia: An Asia and Continent" Dr. Mary Jane Lim-Abraham, president of the Philippine Lipid Society, will lecture on "Current Fix in Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus, Dyslipidemia and Cardiovascular Disease" Dr. Esperanza Cabral, co-medical past president of the Philippine Society of Hypertension and current, he vice-president of the Philippine Lipid Society, will tackle the important topic of "Cardiovascular Risk Management in Women: Before Late than Never".

According to Dr. Dimaguila, a trend through in the treatment of atherosclerotic cardiovascular disease exists with the development of the relationship between control of hypertension and dyslipidemia with drugs, and the anti-atherosclerotic effects of drugs have been developed which include the "statin" pioneers and the drug called "combined" pioneered after the pioneer's logical properties that helped reduce the progression, if not reverse the atherosclerotic pathologic process. "The statin, partly limited in their clinical use were," Dr. Dimaguila says.

Dr. Lim-Abraham will present some 10% data correlating visceral or intra-abdominal fat with diabetes, cholesterol problems and cardiovascular disease. "Waist type 2 diabetic patients are overweight or obese and have too much fat in the abdomen," says Dr. Lim-Abraham. She explains that diabetes has a cousin who has the characteristics of insulin, then gets resistant for tissues unresponding their ability to store high-quality fat, which is excess store of fat. This then leads to insulin resistance in the muscle and liver, and coupled with the reduced secretion of insulin from the pancreas, elevated blood sugar or diabetes develops.

"The good news is that these dysfunctional fat cells can be corrected before getting the cells," Dr. Lim-Abraham says. She will be expounding on this during her plenary lecture.

Dr. Cabral will discuss the gaps in the increasing prevalence of heart disease and stroke among Filipino women. She believes that the increased disease and stroke in women is linking and can be lowered especially compared to the cardiovascular conditions have been healthy counterparts. "It is important to treat risk factor strategies and intensive that there are nearly 50,000 women who die each year that heart disease and stroke," says Dr. Cabral.

Dr. Cabral, who is also currently the Chair of the Council for Cardiovascular Prevention in Women of the Philippine Heart Association, stresses that that are more strongly risks in the socioeconomic status, together with adverse emotional stressors that are heavily present, affect the unfavorably those behavior modifiers and physical inactivity among Filipino women.

Organizing Committee

Chairperson: Dr. Esperanza I. Cabral
Co-Chairperson: Dr. Rodolfo R. Reyes
Secretary: Dr. Elizabeth T. Paz-Pacheco

SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE
Chair: Dr. Rafael R. Castillo
Co-Chair: Dr. Rudy T. Ong
Dr. Lynch Gomez
Dr. Rose Marie G. Ho
Dr. Felix Eduardo V. Punzalan

FREE COMMUNICATION SESSIONS COMMITTEE
Chair: Dr. Ramon C. Dimaguila
Members: Dr. Felix Eduardo V. Punzalan
Dr. Rachel Ann A. Tumangan-Mendoza
Dr. Eugenio B. Reyes
Dr. Ma. Elena C. Cruz, Sec.

SPECIAL PROGRAMS/AWARDS COMMITTEE
Overall Coordinator: Dr. Felix Eduardo V. Punzalan
Members: Dr. Benjamin V. Tumangan-Mendoza

SCIENTIFIC EXHIBITS AND POSTERS COMMITTEE
Chair: Dr. Ramon C. Dimaguila
Co-Chair: Dr. Abel Hans P. Bautista
Members: Mr. Francisco Duque III, MD, MSC
Dr. Antonio S. Abalajon
Dr. Mary Anne M. Lim-Abraham
Dr. Esperanza I. Cabral
Dr. Rodolfo R. Reyes
Dr. Elizabeth T. Paz-Pacheco

REGISTRATION COMMITTEE
Chair: Dr. Lina E. Lanting
Co-Chair: Dr. Adrian E. Asuncion
Members: Mr. Francisco Duque III, MD, MSC (DOH)
Ms. Melissa Ngo (Therapeutics, Inc.)
Mr. Orvin de Vera (Therapeutics, Inc.)
Mr. Jason Tiongco (Therapeutics, Inc.)

AWARDS AND SOCIALS COMMITTEE
Chair: Dr. Mary Anne M. Lim-Abraham
Co-Chair: Dr. Rodolfo V. Ingles

EXHIBIT/PUBLIC AND PHYSICIAN ARRANGEMENT COMMITTEE
Chair: Dr. Dante S. and Rosario
Co-Chair: Dr. Abel Hans P. Bautista

ACCOMMODATION AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE
Chair: Dr. Rafael R. Castillo
Co-Chair: Dr. Antonio S. Abalajon

PSH-PLS SECRETARIAT
Ms. Victoria V. Ramos
Ms. Josephine O. Lantin
Mr. Noel C. Hatchimonji

JOINT 11TH PSH-PLS ANNUAL CONVENTION

Speakers:

Ms. Zenaida Alcantara
Dr. Nelson Abalajon
Dr. Lynn Antonio Gomez
Dr. Raquel Alvarez
Dr. Celina Acosta-Galang
Dr. Josette Aldaz
Dr. Leo Carlo Bulatao
Dr. Alejandro Barrapa
Dr. Adolfo Bolisadio
Dr. Esperanza Cabral
Dr. Rafael Castillo
Ms. Phoeby Cruz
Dr. Jaime Dans
Dr. Rodiaro De Leon

Dr. Ramon Dimaguila
Dr. Patty Go
Dr. Reynaldo Imperial
Dr. Gabriel Jasul
Dr. Lina Lanting-Ang
Dr. Mary Anne Lim-Abraham
Dr. Augusto Limjoco
Dr. Dante Morales
Dr. Benito Padilla
Dr. Gregorio Panaguil, Jr.
Dr. Elizabeth Paz-Pacheco
Dr. Ma. Teresa Pena-Gee
Dr. Ricardo Quiroz
Dr. Eugene Reyes

Dr. Peter Paul Rivera
Ms. Cecilia Rodriguez
Dr. Rosario Sevilla
Dr. Vicky Sevilla, Jr.
Ms. Joan Sumpio
Dr. Rody Sy
Mr. Roberto Tagaing
Dr. Roberto Tanchanco
Dr. Oscar Tiole
Dr. Tommy Ty-Whiting
Ms. Felicidad Velandria, RND
Dr. Elvira Villarama
Dr. Susan Yu-Gan

The Organizing Committee of the PSH & PLS expresses sincere gratitude to the following cooperating societies / organizations and companies for their support to its Joint 11th Convention.

Department of Health (DOH)
Asian Association for Metabolic Disorders (AAMD) - Philippine Chapter
Philippine Heart Association (PHA)
Philippine Society of Endocrinology and Metabolism (PSEM)
Philippine Diabetes Association (PDA)
Manila Society of the Philippines (SSP)
Philippine Society of Nephrology (PSN)
Philippine Neurological Association (PNA)
Philippine Society of Vascular Surgeons (PSVS)
Philippine Academy of Family Physicians (PAFP)
Philippine Association of Government Medical Practitioners, Inc. (PAGMP)
Philippine Association of Military Surgeons (PAMS)
Philippine Academy of Physicians in School Health, Inc. (PAPSHI)
Philippine College of Occupational Medicine (PCOM)
Philippine Association for the Study of Overweight and Obesity (PASOO)
Institute for Studies on Diabetes Foundation, Inc. (ISDF)
Philippine Nurses Association (PNA)
Occupational Health Nurses Association of the Philippines (OHNAP)
Food and Nutrition Research Institute (FNRI)
Bell-Horner Children's Association of the Philippines (BCAP)
Philippine Health Social Science Association (PHSSA)
Philippine Association of Medical Technologists (PAMET)
Philippine Physical Therapy Association (PPTA)
Philippine Medical Association (PMA)

AstraZeneca
MERCK
Schering-Plough International Operations
Bayer
Boehringer Ingelheim
MSD
Pfizer
Nutrapharm
Unilab
Roche
NOVARTIS
SERVIER

The WORLD

Editor Lorraine B. Gozon

Muslim outrage over cartoons rises

BEIRUT, LEBANON—LEBANON APOLOGIZED MONday to Denmark after thousands of rampaging Muslim demonstrators set fire to its diplomatic mission in Beirut in the most virulent of escalating worldwide rage by Muslim over caricatures of the Prophet Muhammad.

One demonstrator was killed and four were wounded Monday after police opened fire during protests that erupted across Afghanistan against the cartoons.

Police opened fire when protesters started throwing stones in a second day of demonstrations by about 1,000 people in eastern Laghman province, provincial information director Hassan Naugahtai said.

Five people were wounded including the man who died in hospital in the nearby city of Jalalabad, local doctor Mohammad Sarif said.

Thousands of people marched in several cities in Afghanistan, including the capital Kabul, to denounce the cartoons which Muslims say are blasphemous.

At least 15 people were killed in Afghanistan in May last year in protests that erupted after US magazine Newsweek reported that the Koran had been disrespectfully treated in a US detention facility in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

Lebanon: Information Minister Ghazi Aridi said early Monday that the government had unanimously "entered and condemned the acts of riots ... that harmed Lebanon's reputation and its civilized image and the noble aim of the demonstration."

"The Cabinet apologizes to Denmark," Aridi said.

At least one person died, 30 were injured... half of them security officials—and about 200 people were detained in the violence Sunday, officials said. Prime Minister Fuad Saniora said the arrested included 76 Syrians, 35 Palestinians and 30 Lebanese.

The interior ministry, who is responsible for the police force that failed to stop the protesters, submitted his resignation at the session. The parliamentary opposition and even some Cabinet colleagues of Interior Minister Hassan Sabat had demanded he step down, but the government opposed it, insisting it was not a "work issue" of the resignation calibre.

The government also called for a speedy investigation.

The fierce violence came a day after violent protests in neighboring Syria, including the burning of the Danish consulate there. The United States accused the Syrian government of backing the protests in Lebanon and Syria.

Thousands also took to the streets Sunday elsewhere in the Muslim world and parts of Europe, including some 3,000 Afghans who burned a Danish flag and demanding that the editors at Jyllands-Posten—which originally published the cartoons—be prosecuted for blasphemy. Afghan President Hamid Karzai urged forgiveness.

In Malaysia, an editor at a small newspaper on remote Borneo island resigned for reprinting the caricatures and, in an unforgiveness fatwa, the Iranian Tehran newspaper apologized and expressed "profound regret over the unauthorized publication."

The Islamic Army in Iraq, a key group in the insurgency fighting US-led and Iraqi forces, posted a second Internet statement Monday calling for violence against citizens of countries where the cartoonists have been published.

In Beirut, the attack on the Danish embassy took on a sectarian dimension in this normally Muslim-Christian nation, which suffered a 1975-90 civil war. Muslim extremists took over the consulate in the Christian Ashrafieh neighborhood where the Danish mission is located, smashing buses on property for about three hours. AP/AFP

HUNDREDS of Danes gathered in Copenhagen on Sunday to appeal for "peaceful dialogue" as Muslim protest that has erupted over the publication of cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad. —AFP

PHOC ENERGY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
PHOC
INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID
2006-2008 WHITE HOUSE RENTAL FOR PHOC-EDC
BAC CHAIRMAN

Amid genuine anger, some see hand of gov'ts in riots

By Bassem Mroue

DAMASCUS, SYRIA—CROWDS SET FIRE TO Danish and Norwegian missions in Damascus and more than 100 people died in Central Common mine European offices in the Gaza Strip.

The Middle East has for months been a powder keg of point-up and Western anger over the war in Iraq and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and the European publication of caricatures of the Prophet Muhammad seems to have been the spark that lit the fuse.

But the protests— displayed the cruelest in Syria, Lebanon, the Palestinian territories and Iraq, also may have been exploited or intensified by some Muslim countries in the region to create unrest with Western powers, observers said.

Syria and Iran have growing pressure from the Americans and the Europeans on the issues of foreign extremists infiltrating Iraq's borders and on Tehran's nuclear program. And Egypt, one of the first to publicly criticize the series of cartoons, has been critical of the Danish government for funding critics of Islam since.

"This is an organized attempt to take advantage of Muslim anger for purposes that do not serve the interests of Muslims and Lebanon, but those of others beyond the border," Lebanese Social Affairs Minister Nayla Mouawad, a Christian, told Sunday after riots in Beirut.

Syria blamed Denmark for the protests, criticizing the Scandinavian nation for refusing to apologize after the cartoonists were first published in September in the Danish newspaper Jyllands-Posten.

Denmark's Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen has said he personally disapproves of the caricatures and any attacks on religious—but insisted the cartoon apologize on behalf of his country's independent press.

The caricatures, which have been published recently in several European and New Zealand newspapers as a statement on behalf of a few pens, provoked a genuine and deep anger among many Muslims as Islamic tradition forbids any depictions of the religion's holiest figure.

One caricature showed the revered prophet wearing a turban shaped like a bomb with a burning fuse. That image than reinforced the belief among many Muslims that the US-led wars in Afghanistan and Iraq were not simply in response to the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks or the drives posed by Saddam Hussein, but part of a Western war against Islam little different from the Crusades of the Middle Ages.

Although many Muslims were appalled by the show of anger by American soldiers at Iraq's Abu Ghraib prison and reports of deplorable conditions at the Guantanamo Bay prison also have reinforced suspicions that Arabs in general have become targets of the anti-terror war.

The fact that the biggest riots occurred in the Syrian capital and in Beirut also raised questions. Syrian has an extensive security network to make sure that little happens inside its borders without the approval of the second leadership. AP

Invitation to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid
MANILA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT AUTHORITY
Invitation to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid

Most hit in ferry tragedy were poor migrant workers

SAFAGA, EGYPT—MOST OF THE passengers on the ferry that sank in the Red Sea were poor Egyptian villagers who had found jobs in the Gulf and were bringing months if not years worth of savings back to their families.

"I had to borrow cash, he would never have gone to Kuwait," said Mohamed Saleh, who travelled to the distressed ship's port of departure from his village near the southern city of Sohag to look for his uncle Abdelhamid.

His uncle had found a job as a construction worker and used to send money back to Egypt regularly. "The family survived thanks to him," said Saleh.

Hundreds of relatives of missing passengers were still gathered in Safaga on Monday eagerly awaiting information on the fate of their loved ones as search and rescue operations entered their fourth day.

Less than 400 of the 1,415 were confirmed to have been rescued by Sunday night, amid dwindling chances of finding any more survivors and growing fears that the sinking of the Al-Salam Boccaccio 98 would become one of the worst maritime disasters in recent history.

More than 1.5 million Egyptians are known to be working in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Iraq alone, many as day laborers and some with permanent contracts.

Migrant workers inject billions of dollars a year into the Egyptian economy. Their remittances are the country's second source of income after tourism.

Mahmoud has stopped believing his uncle can still be rescued. "Poverty is going to hit the family. I'm just waiting for the body, my mother asked me to."

Ahmed Mostafa Hussein, in the larger town of Hurghada, Ahmed was waiting outside the hospital, hoping to obtain information on the fate of his brother, whom he had not seen since he left to work as a builder in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait.

"Everybody on the boat was bringing lots of money, years of savings. You men everybody wants life," he said.

Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak promised to pay $2,600 to the families of survivors and more than $26,000 to the families of those who died.

"All this money is nothing compared to people's lives. Nobody is thinking about money. If I could say my brother's body I'd give more money than that," Gamal said.

Most of Egypt's expatriate workforce is employed by tough jobs on oil fields or construction sites and have had to face increasing competition from Asian immigrants.

Their salaries in the Gulf state are very modest and most of them choose to pay around $90 for a bus ticket rather than eight or ten times that price to fly back home.

In the lack of information on the fate of the Al-Salam's passengers has sparked an outcry among the families which sporadically spilled over into violence in Safaga.

But Mustafa Hashem was spending most of the agonizing wait for news of his 47 year-old brother Said in the mosque. "I am still hoping, I'm hoping, everyone is hoping," he said haltingly. AFP

Besieged Thaksin to ban protests near royal palace

THAKSIN

BANGKOK, THAILAND – Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra said on Monday he would not allow further demonstrations against him in the square near the royal palace in Bangkok where 40,000 people protested at the weekend.

Media tycoon Sondhi Limthongkul, who organized the biggest anti-government rally in 14 years, called for another one on Saturday in a bid to have Thaksin from office, but Thaksin said it would not be allowed near the palace.

"That's enough," Thaksin told reporters in the northern city of Chiang Mai. "They can't have it their anymore" because the square was just two steps the palace. he said, citing traffic jams created by the huge weekend gathering.

"We can have democracy, but within boundaries. It should be organized somewhere else," he said.

Sondhi, who began his campaign to oust former ally Thaksin last September, said he would discuss the issue with staff before deciding what to do in response.

"Where he said 'No,' we can't went, otherwise there would be clashes," Sondhi said.

Thaksin has shrugged off the calls to resign and eased a speech to young footballers on Monday to hit back at his critics.

"Democracy is all about living in a society in harmony. A society where injury don't exist is full of those who don't play by the rules and those who are endless power under investment company Temasek.

Two cabinet ministers belonging to a coalition faction of Thaksin's ruling party resigned in the wake of the $1.9-billion sale, ensuring "political stability." The weekend rally attracted many middle-class people in Bangkok upset by the sale.

Analysts said the chances of Thaksin stepping aside were remote, given his backing among the country's rural and Thaksin brushed off the weekend demonstration as "a few idiots."

Reuters

ERRATUM

In the January 30 issue, Orchard Property Marketing Corporation congratulates its dedicated sales representatives for their hard work and excellent performance through a consequential ad at the lifestyle section. However, we wish to correct the name of one of the Divine Mahogany members, instead of Andrew Lapitan, the picture on the photo was Ms. Emmalyn Aguilar. Ms. Aguilar is a Brand Manager from the Consumer-over Division.

polymuton

Powerful German Connections

While there are many water piping systems in the market, Polymuton offers the truly ideal solution to your piping needs.

Polymuton, which is made in Germany, gives you a world-class product. And, Polymuton uses only 100% polypropylene virgin plastic so you get cleaner, more efficient, longer lasting water connections.

Visit Technical Support Team will be on hand to help you assembly install Polymuton.

No plastic tools – No G.I. "tube" tools

Leak Proof

Exclusively Distributed by

CAMP MARKETING & DEVELOPMENT, INC.

IWATA MORE THAN 30 YEARS IN THE MARKET NOW
TIME RECORDERS

Do you have BAD BREATH?

A MUST IN EVERY BUSINESS!
We Offer The World's Most Trusted High Pressure Washers & Vacuum Cleaners!

Live comfortably...

MAKATI SHANGRI-LA HOTEL
P9,980

ON SALE!
AT INTRODUCTORY PRICES. LIMITED QUANTITIES ONLY
P4950 only!
One piece water closet with push-button dual flush, includes lavatory with pedestal.

Pinifure

Bed bugs hurting Australia tourism

SYDNEY – LEADERS of Australia's tourism industry will hold an urgent meeting Thursday on how to battle a plague of bed bugs that is costing the sector millions of dollars.

The Queensland Tourism Industry Council called the meeting of hotel, motel and hostel owners after a study found a 1,000 percent rise in cases of bed bug infestations in Australia.

Sydney's Westmead Hospital Department of Medical Entomology estimated that the barrage of bloodsuckers was costing the accommodation industry up to 100 million ($75 million) dollars per year.

The hospital's Stephen Doggett linked the eruption to an influx of travelers from exotic destinations and species-specific poison to kill cockroaches in place of pesticides which act against a variety of pests, including bed bugs.

Doggett accused the hotel industry of playing down the bed bug problem for fear of scaring away tourists.

But Queensland backpackers' association chair Ralph Kreitz, who will lead Tuesday's meeting, said the tourism sector was actively addressing the problem.

"We just thought the smartest thing to do was for us all to sit down and discuss them about and collaborate to come up with a coordinated approach," he said the national news agency AAP.

Bed bugs are small, brownish insects which feed on blood.

Doggett said the incentives outbreak was part of a worldwide rise in bed bug infestations. AFP

The Republic of the Philippines

WESTERN VISAYAS MEDICAL CENTER
Iloilo City

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

INQUIRER

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT SUPERVISORS

CUSTOMER SERVICE REPRESENTATIVE

Brains in USS Cole bombing bolts Yemen jail

SANAA—INTERPOL ISSUED A global security alert on Sunday over the escape of at least 13 convicted al-Qaeda militants who smashed their way out of a jail in Yemen, calling them a "clear and present danger to all countries."

The escapees included Jamal Badawi, mastermind of the bombing of the USS Cole in the Yemeni port of Aden in October 2000, which killed 17 US sailors. He was originally sentenced to death, but this sentence commuted to 15 years in prison.

Another prominent escapee was Nasser al-Bahri, sentenced to death as leader of the group convicted of bombing the French oil tanker Limburg off the Yemeni coast in 2002, killing one seaman.

A security source in Yemen said the tunnel from which the men escaped was thought to be around 140 m long, more or less as originally reported, and led to a mosque.

The source said authorities discovered the escape on Friday, but it was believed the prisoners had fled Thursday night and were definitely aided by more than one accomplice on the outside because the tunnel was believed to have been dug from the mosque to the prison.

The tunnel entry was in the women's section of the mosque, but beneath that the male section because women rarely pray at mosque.

The 13 militants were among 23 inmates who broke out of jail in the capital Sanaa in a major embarrassment for Yemeni authorities, who have cracked down on militants in the ancestral land of Osama bin Laden and positioned themselves as an ally of the United States in the war on terrorism.

A Yemeni man-on website (nowwadreamer.net) said: 17 of those who escaped were convicted of al-Qaida-linked crimes, while the other six were awaiting trial for similar charges.

Interpol on Sunday circulated a warning to its 184 member states over the missing prisoners and urged them to take extra precautions at their borders.

But even days after the escape was discovered, Interpol had not yet issued individual wanted notices for the fugitives because it said Yemeni authorities had yet to provide it with all the required information.

A government official said in the capital Sanaa:

"The interior ministry was recalling police to Interpol with the names of the fugitives, their photographs and fingerprints. It asked them to circulate the list worldwide, fearing they might escape Yemen." Reuters

US triples spending to stop Iraq bombs

WASHINGTON—THE PENTAGON is tripling its spending to defeat IED's—a \$3 billion, on-a-newly-expanded effort to combat the rising number of increasingly powerful homemade bombs that are the No. 1 killer of US troops in Iraq, The New York Times reported on its website on Sunday.

The move is a stark acknowledgment that despite years of trying (much talk from the devices, the response has not been sufficiently focused or coordinated) at the highest levels, the Times said.

Last year, 407 of the 896 American troops killed in Iraq were killed by the bombs, which are called improvised explosive devices (IEDs), the report said. The number of IEDs against allied and Iraqi forces and Iraqi civilians nearly doubled last year from 10,000 to 16,555.

The intensified effort to combat the makeshift bombs, which in one three were led by a one-star general, was recently put under a colonel, four-star Army general, Montgomery Meigs, the Times said, citing interviews with a dozen military officials.

In the next few months, the defense department plans to double the number of technical, forensic and intelligence specialists assigned to the problem, to about 360 military service members and contractors in the United States and Iraq, the paper said.

Hundreds of other experts are being called in and new technology and outlying techniques are also quickly being pushed into service, The Times reported. Reuters

DEVOTED
Kashmir Shiite Muslim girls watch the Ashura procession in Srinagar, India Feb. 5. On Ashura, Shiite Muslims commemorate the 7th century death of Imam Hussein, grandson of Prophet Mohammad. AP

Japan cons graying fast

TOKYO—THERE ARE STILL plenty of metal bars and handcuffs, but Japanese prisons these days have some new features—like wheelchair-friendly train ramps, handrails in the bathrooms and nurses trained to spoon-feed inmates.

The aim is adapting prison life to a new kind of inmate in Japan: The elderly ran.

Like the wider society, Japan's prison population is rapidly aging, with the number of 60 years old and over inmates—more than half of their 18th—tripling in the past decade and expected to rise even further.

Senior prisoners in 2004 numbered 7,381, up nearly 60 percent from 2000 and accounting for more than 11 percent of all inmates in Japan, the justice ministry says. In the US, prisoners aged 55 or older make up only 3 percent of inmates.

The trend is forcing Japan's 67 prisons to make changes to adjust to the new inmates.

"Overall, their movements are slow, they have to make a lot of effort to understand our simple instructions. It really takes up a lot of time," said Sato, a correctional official at the Japan prison who wanted to be identified only by his family name. AP

Motorbike crashes killed more US soldiers than Afghan conflict

CAMP LEJEUNE, NORTH CAROLINA—More American troops have died in US roads in off-duty motorcycle accidents than have been killed fighting in Afghanistan since Sept. 11, 2001, safety records show.

Military commanders in North Carolina say the deaths are largely the result of boredom, bootleg gas and schmaltz to burn off after troops return from wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Nearly 204 troops have died on motorcycles since the 2001 terrorist attacks. That's compared to 219 killed while serving in Afghanistan.

Nearly 1,300 more troops have been injured on motorcycles.

Marine Lance Cpl. Mark Strickland, 24, was one of five Marines from Camp Lejeune who were involved in serious motorcycle crashes in October, four of them fatal. News home just a few weeks from combat in Iraq's deadly Anbar Province. Three of the Marines were killed and another lost a leg.

"When the doctor told me that he was dead, I told him that wasn't acceptable, it just wasn't acceptable," said Andrea Strickland, 22, the widow of Mark Strickland, 23 said. "He just got back from a war zone, and you're going to tell me that he died doing something he loved?"

Lt. Gen. James F. Amos, commander of the Camp Lejeune-based II Marine Expeditionary Force described the crashes in October as "a cold shot to the heart" and ordered a crackdown. The following month several base operations were halted to focus on safety, particularly for motorcyclists.

Camp Lejeune also added safety programs and reemphasized training rules. These include a mentor program, down-ground that is being considered in a model for the entire Marine Corps. AP

PALESTINIANS look at the remnants of a car, one of two hit in an Israeli airstrike in Gaza City Feb. 3, which killed two of the Islamic Jihad's top militants. AP

Palestinian coffers missing $700 million

GAZA CITY— ABOUT $700 MILLION has been pilfered from the Palestinian Authority coffers, an official inquiry showed Sunday, as Israel agreed to unblock funds it owes the Palestinian government.

The revelation came as three Palestinian militants were killed in the first deadly Israeli air strike on Gaza since Hamas' landslide victory in last month's general election while an elderly Israeli woman was killed when a Palestinian went on a knife rampage on a minibus near Tel Aviv.

News of the gaping hole in the Palestinian treasury was revealed by attorney general Ahmed al-Meghani at the end of an investigation into corruption.

"We are talking of a figure of around $700 million," Meghani told reporters in Gaza City, saying numerous indictments would be handed out in the coming days.

To date, police have arrested 25 people in connection with the inquiry while another 18 are on the run, he said.

Hamas' landslide victory in last month's election for the Palestinian legislature was partly based on its pledge to eradicate rampant corruption.

However, the result has further exhausted the cash-strapped PA financial crisis, with the United States and European Union threatening to cut funds unless Hamas commits itself to nonviolence and recognizes Israel's right to exist.

Israel initially froze tens of millions of dollars in customs duties which it owed the Palestinians, arguing that it wanted to ensure the money in transit it did not end up in the hands of "terrorists."

The government released its names on Sunday, agreeing to hand over a quarter of cash which should have been paid out on the first of the month, but officials warned there would be no more transfers after Hamas forms the next Palestinian government.

"Not even a single shekel will be transferred while Hamas is in power," said Housing Minister Zeev Boim.

Both the European Union and United States have agreed to continue funding while a caretaker government assumes office.

Israel's deadly air strike, which killed three members of the radical Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades, drew sharp condemnation from Hamas, which simultaneously assessed the Palestinians' "right to self-defense."

"People have the right to defend themselves in the face of these acts of the occupation," said Hamas leader Ismail Haniya told AFP, delaying a planned trip to Gaza for several hours as he could attend the militants' funerals.

Israel said the raid, which targeted a building in Gaza City, was in response to a mortar attack Friday which injured four Israelis, including a baby.

In further violence, a knife-wielding Palestinian student killed an Israeli woman and injured five others on a minibus in Petah Tikva near Tel Aviv.

The assailant, described as Palestinian-Israeli Mahmud Abbas, entered Hamas' Gaza stronghold for talks with the Islamists about setting up a new government.

Abbas' spokesperson Nabil Abu Rudeina slammed Israel's raid on Gaza as "a dangerous escalation" as a crisis of crucial political change within Palestine succeeds. AFP

Israel kills top Islamic Jihad explosives expert

GAZA—ISRAEL KILLED THE TOP bomb maker for Islamic Jihad and another gunman in an air raid in Gaza City on Sunday, security sources said, hours after an Israeli and three other militants died in a bomb barge of vehicle-free violence.

Witnesses said Israeli aircraft fired two missiles that blew up two vehicles, killing Adnan Bostan, 28, the head of Islamic Jihad's unit that produces rockets and explosives, and Jihad al-Ghawabri, 23, who led a resident firing squad.

An Islamic Jihad official said Bostan was the group's most senior explosives expert and engineer.

Islamic Jihad had claimed responsibility for one of the worst recent rocket strikes from Gaza on Israel, in which three Israelis were wounded, including a baby, on Friday.

The group was quickly joined by other militants in vows to avenge the Israeli strike. "We will hunt the ground and respond everywhere," said Abu Hamza, a spokesperson for Islamic Jihad.

Abu Qusai, a spokesperson for the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades said: "Every Zionist, soldier and civilian, will be a target for our missiles."

Hundreds of angry supporters gathered outside a mosque where the bodies were taken and chanted: "Death to Israel, Death to America," as gunmen fired rifles into the air.

An Israeli army spokesperson said "the air force attacked two vehicles in the northern Gaza Strip carrying Islamic Jihad terrorists who were responsible for projectile rocket attacks against Israel."

An Israeli security source said Bostan had also spearheaded rocket attacks by two other militant groups, the Al-Aqsa Brigades and Popular Resistance Committees.

Reuters

Globe received the highest rating for connecting calls on the first try and for call completion, according to the 4th Quarter 2005 National Telecommunications Commission monitoring report.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

OPINION

Vol. 23 No. 92

Publisher Isabel Yuvienco
Editor in Chief Letty Jimenez-Magsanoc
Managing Editor Jose Ma. D. Nolasco
Associate Editor Rolando S. Tolentino
Associate Editor for Leadership Rosario A. Garcellano
News Editor Antonio T. Enriquez Jr. • Chief, News Exp. Desk Nelly Pichay
Opinion Editor Joaquin V. Henson
Managing Editor Francisco S. Tatad Jr.
Assoc. Chief, Editor Juan P. Soliven II Jr.
Editorial Consultant Amando Doronila
Chief Photographer Raul S. Sobrevinas
Art & Design Director Lourdes A. Yuvienco

Board of Advisors Prime M. Pinto
President Alexandra Prieto-Romualdez
Executive Vice President Caesar D. Saloma
Senior Vice President for Sales and Marketing Manuel R. Nolasco
Vice President for Finance Ruben S. Suarez
Asst. to the President Lydia P. Lagsanhan

Readers' Advocate Lydia Kalaw Tiro

All rights reserved. No part may be reproduced, distributed or transmitted in any form or by any means without prior written permission of the Philippine Daily Inquirer.

Helping the poor

EDITORIAL

WHEN YOU COME DOWN TO IT, POVERTY WAS the root cause of the "Wowowee" stampede that resulted in the death of 74 people last Saturday. It was hopeless, grinding poverty that made people line up at the Philsports Arena as early as Monday sleeping in their plazas and leaving only to answer the call of nature. It was poverty that made the people rush forward and knock down the gates that stood between them and a chance to win a house or P1 million in cash or two cars or a jeepney and other prizes.

We already know what happened: 74 of them died and about 300 others were injured in the stampede. These were people who were so poor, so hopeless in life that they were ready to make "kapit sa patalim" (literally translated, to risk even death itself to reach their goal). And ultimately and tragically, for many of them, their decision of a better life did end in death.

Some people say that those who died may now be in a better state than those who survived. They may have a point there: the poorest of the poor have to suffer a living death every day.

The people who promised the ill-starred show may not know it (but how could they not have known it?), but they were actually exploiting the poor to build higher ratings. Shows like "Wowowee" promote mendicancy, the fast-buck mentality instead of honest and hard work and perseverance. They dangle before poor people visions of instant wealth. They promote games of chance, instead of hard work, true grit and self-reliance, as the answer to their poverty.

Game shows offering big prizes in highly developed countries are staged mostly for their fun and entertainment value, although, of course, there is always the profit motive. But you do not see tens of thousands of people lining up and, in some cases, stampeding, or get a chance at winning the prizes. In our country, the situation of the poor people is so bad—and it is getting worse every year—that they will risk anything to lift themselves out of the state of poverty.

But given the present state of the economy, what can poor people do to improve their lot? Those in the upper-lower classes still have some property like a carabao, a small lot or a tricycle, etc. that they can sell or mortgage, or they borrow money to pay for the fees required to they can work abroad. Some set up small retail enterprises. But when about those who really have nothing but the clothes on their backs and who live a hand-to-mouth existence?

The stories of some of the survivors who were interviewed on radio were truly heartbreaking. Some of them had not eaten for days and had only drunk water. Some had money only for transportation to the Philsports stadium; they were apparently hoping that they would be lucky and win some of the minor cash prizes for their return home.

Many of those who went to the Philsports stadium were unemployed or underemployed. The unemployment rate now stands at 7.4 percent. We are sure that many of those who flocked to the "Wowowee" show last Saturday would want to work but there are not many jobs open in our country. Or there are jobs open, but they require certain skills and knowledge that only a higher education and training can give. The challenge to the government and the private sector is not only to create more jobs but to give the masses better education so that they can obtain higher-paying positions.

The Chinese have a saying: "Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime." Let us stop abetting a culture of gambling and mendicancy. Let us stop promoting games of chance and instead teach the virtue of hard work. Let us correct the attitude of the poor of depending on the government for choice and handouts and instead instill in them the value of self-reliance. Let us help the poor help themselves by giving them better education, creating more job opportunities and opening credit facilities to them so that they can set up small enterprises.

'Red List' entry

VIEWPOINT

Juan L. Mercado

IN NOVEMBER 1998, SCIENTISTS STUMBLED across one of the world's rarest damselflies in forest remnants that dot the Cebu mountain range where President Ramon Magsaysay's DC-3 crashed 48 years ago. The miniscule population of this dappled insect (*Vestalis*) with delicate dragonfly wings suddenly collapsed in 2003. Today they're gone.

Over 301 species of dragon and damselflies flit about in Hesyan, Negros, Panay, Mindoro or Sibuyan. The National Museum of Natural History in Lahtoy, the Netherlands, houses the Roland Müller Collection of Philippine dragonflies.

Nobody thought damselflies existed in Cebu—until University of San Carlos researchers found a handful, resting on low, leaf tips in a 20-meter strip along a Talisayan forest stream. USC's Teodoldo Buenavista tagged the insect with its striking elongated black abdomen with pale bluish circular. But its color, wings, head shape, etc. differed from other species, is called Dr. Ivan Sederchuck, team leader. He sent specimens to "the world authority on damselflies here and in Thailand," forwarding of Müller's Cebu collection.

"The Cebu specimens differ drastically from those of other islands," Sederchuck concluded. "They're of separate new species." Neither were they found elsewhere. The find "most likely is endemic to Cebu."

Cebu is practically denuded. So, three days earlier here "undoubtedly the most limited area to survive," the Helsinki zoologist added. "It may be one of the most vulnerable odonate species in the whole world."

Thus, he published the Cebu damselfly's description (subtly, A is to odd's name now signed by another). Its scientific name now signed by another), he published the report in the "Red List" compiled by the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources.

For 40 years now, the "Red List" pinpointed the paths plants and animals because of genetic diversity and habitat blocks of ecosystems threatened by extinction.

"The new species is named after Dr. Perez Soldevechuck," he explained. "(This) recognizes his achievements in studying and restoring the last remaining virgin forests of Cebu." Thus, *vinciusivan soldevechuck* leapt into IUCN's "Red List."

Soldevechuck has worked with researcher out of the USC for 18 years. He's married to a Filipina and speaks Cebuano fluently. In fact, one of his books is a Cebuano-German dictionary.

Scientific work, with Filipino colleagues, trying to restore Cebu's devastated ecology commanded international attention. In contrast, USC research is little known to Cebu officials fixated on politics.

USC's nearly four centered threatened birds and plants, endemic to Cebu. In 1991, the Star Garlon team found in forest patches the Cebu flowerpecker (*dicaeum quadricolor*), long after ornithologists wrote it off as "extinct." Even the few survivors rank among "the rarest bird species in the world," Cebu ornithologist Miguel Ibañez said.

In 1998, USC scientists focused on Kawasan Valley in Badian, Cebu. Tourist brochures peddle Kawasan as one of the nation's most beautiful waterfalls. For scientists, it's the "hottest biodiversity spot" in the country.

The team found that "Kawasan Mesquite Bandit" (*Acanthaclisis quinquedentata*). The Kawasan paper bit butterfly (also known as endemic is named after the renowned lepidopterist Julian Amedeo. "You can't find them in any other place in the world," Sederchuck/ast notes. "Even in Cebu, they're found only in Badian."

Rare damselflies, algae and butterflies in Kawasan Valley are "examples of new discoveries," the team wrote. "We can not even tell how many kind of precious organisms exist, unless further studies are undertaken."

That forecast came true with the Talisayan damselfly findings. "This unique population remained quite steady until July 2003," IUCN wrote.

Why did it collapse? Local farmers, seizing each virgin like temptation, washed pesticide containers in the streams that runs. Damselflies were quickly to pollution in springs. They're early warning systems.

Sederchuckwas photographed the last male damselfly sighted in March 2003. "It remains to be seen, whether the species is able to survive this catastrophe," IUCN says.

For three years now, USC scientists have posted over Talisayan aerial maps, looking for springs that cut through forest canopy where *Vestalis* could breed. "No luck," says Sederchuckwas. "A species may be declared 'extinct' only 50 years after the last sighting. All we have are single streams in a Talisayan forest that has stopped shrinking. It's expanding."

So, what's the big deal if it's frequently or two disappear? The question disappeared when noted Oxford taxonomist Norman Myers. When a plant or animal slips into extinction, so do its unique genes. Those are building blocks for life for future products, from medicine to food. Obliteration closes future options.

Less than one percent of tropical plants have been screened for medicinal uses. USC studies list 300 plus plants with medicinal properties in Cebu. Only one has been tapped commercially: marijuana. The Philippines is one of the world's list "hotspots of the best spots," Worse than half of the country's biodiversity is found in southern rim. It's a world complex formed via disrupting, valuable beyond measure.

"Glory be to God for dappled things," wrote Gerald Manley Hopkins, S.J. Our grandchildren are poorer by our decimation of these dappled insects with disarming wings and delicate beauty. Sederchuck/ast notes. "Species are not over-aware we've been further bugged.

* * *

E-mail: juan_mercado@pacific.net.ph

Scourge

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

MAJOR GEN. JOSITO PALPARAN REVELS IN being reviled by the enemy. Instead of labelling or being called names by Ang Bayan, the official organ of the Communist Party of the Philippines, he loves it. He considers being labeled a "butcher," a perpetrator of "bloody repression," "barbarism" and "gruesome murders" a compliment.

He is sanguine. The insurgency is "more of a psychological war. The military effort is about 20-30 percent only." Crushing the NPA "is one to two years is more than enough because the enemy is not strong." "They are better than us on the propaganda front... We have to concentrate on combining their intelligence work and enhancing their support system." It is my belief that the intensity of the purge by Congress was premature," the day as day policies of the rebel movement." NGOs infiltrated or directed by the Communist Party provide materials and shelter for the NPA."

That is now an indication of a Cold War wartime bias some to partake over the country's and in, surgeries, for example, that the AFP may say it is no another proof that "military intelligence" is a contradiction in terms. At the very least, there's common sense to other Palparan's logic. If the enemy is weak, why the use the butcher's ask? Why try to establish a monopoly over all?

If Palparan had done his homework, he would know that over the last decade and a half, the fortunes of the communist movement have plunged steeply. Not least of the reasons for this is the "killing fields," which has supposed to spread accordingly, something it expected in decades past. The "killing fields" did not just run in many provinces where rebels, it carried away existing ones. I personally think it has done more to hurt than to encourage the people living with their fear of the propaganda of the left combined. Living it down will prove far more protracted, or whatever, for that movement than victory.

The broader reason for it is the collapse of the Soviet Union and the fall of the Berlin Wall, which rendered the collapse of the communist ideology. That is the reason why the local communist movement is able to recruit now only from the

(continued on page 13)

Timely visit of India's president

THE VISIT OF PRESIDENT ALAM OF INDIA IS very timely as our nation is again caught up in a new economic awakening after two decades marked as the Philippine Asian (formerly Tiger) that filled 70-people-and-kilometer-900-Salute outlined in a 40-minute speech before the joint session of Congress yesterday. The people of nation that has doubled fertile in length, reducing the size population poverty. Of India's one billion people, 260 million, or a little over 25 percent, live below the poverty line, while many millions more are "at the fringe" of poverty. India is being addressed through a wide-ranging program that includes the development of the rural countryside, such as through the planting of Jatropha for diesel fuel, the recognition of the information technology industry and low, paving the prizes of members for the masses. Salam, and that India's GDP is now given by 7.0 percent for a decade if the lives of its teeming masses are to be substantially improved, it is absolutely necessary that, as said Gloria in the hours growing economies of the world.

* * *

By contrast, the program of action against poverty in the Philippines seems to be dominated by the opposition's predilection for blaming the administration for everything that happens in the country. For instance, instead of looking at the Philippine Arena merely as an opportunity for entrepreneurship and employment for thousands, Sen. Jinggoy Estrada quickly blasted the administration, asserting that it is "grossly incapable of giving our workers jobs, our graduates hope to fill only a number of the jobs our economy needs to sustain its growth." Senator seems to forget that for many years, Iglesia ni Cristo has contributed immensely to the jobs generation of many Filipinos, and the government of its prosperity to wage strikes even when its legal basis for doing so is open to challenge. As a result, many foreign companies have stayed away or dropped operations, with a number of them straddling shop and going elsewhere.

* * *

If we have to look separately at the problem of poverty, I think the accusing finger ought to point to various sectors. The administration has failed to crack down on graft and corruption especially in customs, thus opening itself up to most debilitating attacks that on fiscal economic recovery. On the other hand, Congress is gridlocked over many bills that could uplift our countryside. For instance, when President Estrada spoke about the billions of pesos to make sure these plans to transplant for diesel fuel, it brought to mind our government's past in going on cost-dazzle across the countryside, introducing poor citizens to crops it is very much dependent on research and support structure for the coconut industry, but this has been rendered inactive by issues of billionaire coconut levy funds. Similarly, the Bt eggplant has been rendered inactive by issues of biotechnology and safety. Even the planting of jatropha is being delayed by the passage of the P126-billion-plus levy funds for that purpose. In the meantime, the majority of our over three million coconut farmers and their families remain dispersed poor and their industry in terrible disrepair.

* * *

As Ka Amado spoke about the planting of Jatropha on a large scale in the Bicol region, I went back to the halcyon years 1948, passed by the House but pending, like so many other bills, in the Senate, and how it could produce so much employment, and what about the land-reclaiming planting authority that could make the country's decongesting Metro Manila and triggering a ripple effect on the economics through the island industries? It also has dominant in the Senate. On the other hand, the country and the Arroyo administration is just by saying no to a truly meaningful poverty alleviation program. And what about the giant network that created the tragedy because of its insidious ties for top officials in the planting destruction security measures and

Political Tidbits

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

forestry clamoring was the footage aired on "Bayo ng Bagumbayan" showing that even after they announced that "Panorama" would not be airing, the Lopez family hoisted the flag of the nucleus entrance, with many saying the prizes that would have been given away last Saturday.

Many among the ABS-CBN talents, led by Boy Abunda, have sought to dissipate their guilt by saying that they prayed behind the shows' removal because it provided a chance to "help the poor," to hand out a measure of hope and alleviate the people's desire from by promising a windfall, from a few thousands to a house-and-lot worth more than a million pesos.

But let's be frank about it. Sound far-fetched to the magnify for the crowd, it was good basis of the publication, good for "taste" indeed, for the lucky ones, as Boy Abunda would say, to be seen on TV and bring their favorite celebrity.

* * *

BUT even as our underwrapped and even sympathetic to the ABS-CBN talents, I cannot help but raise peculiar customer behavior... I have less sympathy for the kind of commercial greed that has behind "showcase."

Being a competitor which had ruled the dino-ratings for decades, and against which it had mounted shots after shots, only to fall miserably in the ratings, ABS-CBN conceptualized "Pinoversion" which was a game show only to entice the Kapuso viewers to switch channels. It aired billed on Saturday as tradition—and the ratings...by drowning many of people. Thus Senator Pulma, applying to a question about the reason featuring a "mendicant" mentality among the audience, quipped it by saying that's more also among the show's immediate fans.

But whether benefiting individuals or organizations, shows like "Pinoversion" show is more disgusting—and pitiful. Because, after all, the all talents there—the stars that make. "Others must a little and you feed him for a day, teach him how to fish and you feed him for life." And yet it's lately obvious that given a choice between a fish and a fishing rod, people will always go for the easy money. And it's cheap money that brings in the ratings.

They were invited

At Large

Rina Jimenez-David

So it's only right...and obligatory...for the giant networks to say they would pay for the lifetime and financial services of the late Eddie Ilarde, another broadcasting pioneer.

Ilarde has said he would spend much of his work shaping the morals and paving his respects to the families of the deceased. It is also a media decision, but to the home he was in for his fans, or as the network adores now refer to viewers, their "happenstyle" or family members.

As the "face" of "Pinoversion," the personality winner should be the kind of person that television audiences, Ilarde-ans years it is the interest in show some humanity and empathy. I was truly touched when he said on TV that the biggest thing that the late talent he dropped by a house and prayed for the success of the viewers were the families' faces, especially of the senior citizens, who had been regulars at the studio. This made sense, since as viewers, we have always seen the faces of the "live" audiences. Even more believable is a mannequin. So even as just an "old" friend, it is Ilarde-an's social obligation to conduct those orphaned as a result of his "nominees."

* * *

I HAD been wondering what ABS-CBN management's decision would be regarding the airing of "Pinoversion," so I was heartened to see today the ads featuring the boards' game show host Willie Revillame, who decided to air "Stop to inspiration," news footage and extraordinary interspersed with inspirational song performances. I understand "Stop" will air for a week, while Revillame does his rounds, but I expect "Pinoversion" will be back on the air soon, or wherever the station hosts first the air has donated and it can go about its usual business.

Who will clean up the mess you left?

MY OBSERVATION IS ADMITTEDLY A COMPLAINT-LOT, BUT it is not our fault. In terms and for school, we are taught not to be, those or send. If I were to let couples cheating in my school rooms, I would be expelled. If my father caught me lying, I would have an entire week's allowance and I would be grounded for at least a month. If the hostages tried to cheat the vending, I would be put in jail. All this seems to be only fair; but I do not see the same standards being applied to old or people, including those whose salaries come from your paid by my hard-working parents.

President Macapagal-Arroyo has been accused of lying, cheating and stealing. And I have heard many people speak in her defense, on the occasions that I have acquiescent put forward by her defenders. Finally, they say, she has been effective because she has been innocent and ignorant guilty-all-her-due process. Inevitably she did nothing wrong when she talked to an election official...in fact, all the suspicious remarks made during their conversation, such as those pertaining to kidnapping, vote padding and vote manipulation, were muscled by the election official, not her. Thirdly, pointed she is guilty she remains our homegrown incompetent.

The President should not leave office because she should be presumed innocent until proven guilty? But aren't we entitled a moral sense to a public legal one? The law may be useful in establishing people's legal rights and responsibilities, but it can not dictate the basis of human relations, especially where trust and confidence are concerned.

My parents have taught me that trust is earned and must be continuously earned. I trust my parents not because the law says I should, but because they have not done anything to make me distrust them.

Besides, there are cracks that exist one in the face and there are truths that are the needles buried in the haystack. The President's administration is such that it is not where the truth has buried. Where the truth is at present at the sun rising in the east, must we call persons colors, since? If my girlfriend catches me passionately kissing another girl, I can demand that she give me due process, before being punished, but I cannot demand that she trusts me to trust me.

Only highly respected businessmen, whose somethings pay I have read, says that leaders ought to follow a standard much higher than the one applied to their followers. If he is caught by shareholders doing something inimical to his company, the only honorable thing for him to do is to resign. After resigning, he can demand that due process be followed in determining what punishment he should be given.

This business leader says that serving a higher standard for leaders is only fair because they are very powerful, unlike their subordinates who have nothing else but due process to protect them against slander leaders. Leaders caught with their hands in the cookie jar can no longer lead because they have lost their moral ascendancy. Members of mind that the President needed a similar higher standard to the conduct of Cabinet's wife.

The President did nothing wrong in talking to an election official and, all the opposition about illegal activities were made by the latter? So why didn't the President say anything to stop him? Wasn't she horrified that an election commissioner appointed by her was planning to do something illegal? If she really had only my interests at heart, didn't she owe it to her that this official could not be trusted since he was talking about manipulating the results?

My teachers in religion and in life tell me there are sins of omission as well as of commission. I am sure that if my father heard me say that I intend to cheat in my school exams, he would not be that certain pain without chastising me with the most terrifying punishments if ever I carried it out.

The President is our top person and she represents the basic evil? Material my readers even gave me the notion that evil is fine as long as it is the lesser evil, according to many, evil is evil and we should never compromise ours. If our best available option is someone who lied, cheated and stole, we are doomed. Does this mean that we are saying the 80 million Filipinos today is good enough to lead this country? What if, heaven forbid, something tragic happens to our "best option" at present? Will we have to import our Imee Ver or Thaksin Shinawatra because no one among us 80 million is good enough to run this country?

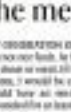
Every day of my life, my teachers tell my parents editorials me or shape up. I think it is now my generation's turn to tell my parents and those who run this country that it is time for them to shape up. They are being selfish and myopic when they complain about the inconveniences and disruptions caused by people protesting against lying, cheating and stealing. They would rather go about their regular business even if it means leaving many fundamental and moral issues unresolved.

Like a giant dust was momentarily driven away today's moral issues will come back to haunt us. Come who will be left to deal with this giant when it returns? Come who will be left to deal with the ugly dust of an irresponsible and egocentric generation that would make their children's future be their worst nightmare? Come who will have to painfully sort out the moral confusion brought upon them by their elders who promise a decent standard?

Jose Miguel V. Bernardo, 35, is a first year JD Education student at the Ateneo de Davao University School. E-mail: jvbernardo@gmail.com

Young Blood

Jose Miguel V. Bernardo



But none is worse when the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? Or welcome contributions from the twenty-somethings and below.—Ed.

The 'Ilustrado' as Filipino

Sense and Sensibility

Isabel L. Hooper

SOME OF MANILA'S FINEST HAVEN DELIGHTS —and something to look forward to—are book launches at Bibliolo Ilaya' works. The size of his name reads, "Ilaya Bertha Hernando, the Filipino author." Just reads, "Ilustrado in Filipino." It just strikes right, making a convenient reverse-an-pedestal, as like his previous one that's no large it lies unnoticed on the coffee table and has to be read standing up inside the Oxford Dictionary.

It is a hilarious prevailing that the ilustrado is temporarily "ilustrado" for the author himself and his sister, the twenty-three, as he describes her. Their is also the stellar cast of speakers like Premier Jose Veloso self-deprecatory remarks about his habit; pure reserved to berating unconscious Filipino; and Ambassador Ed Joaquin Fidel had a Further interesting point to make with regard to the book which perhaps may interest the general reader or survey cannot deny that they could take over the colonizer's way. He then collaborate first with the Spanish, then with the Americans, then the Japanese and finally with the powers that be two hold this one. Hence? And to that the reason the country is in the mess it is now?

Bayer' premise is that it was the ilustrados—Rizal, Luna, Osmena, Manuel, Sol Pilar, Santiago, or, et al.—who "invented" the Filipino national identity. Then this identity was born in the 19th century. Stripped it of political superstitions as bones and flowered in foreign leading restricted to the 1896 Revolution. The quintessential ilustrado is and remains your friend.

The author explains that he wanted to tell an unbiased story, to see the world straight to his own prejudices. He succeeds in that. But I found the two principal characters, Pio Valenzuela, who praises the ilustrado as "cultured" who "invented" the Filipino national identity. Then this identity was born in the 19th century. Stripped it of political superstitions as bones and flowered in foreign leading restricted to the 1896 Revolution. The quintessential ilustrado is and remains your friend.

The author explains that he wanted to tell an unbiased story, to see the world straight to his own prejudices. He succeeds in that. But I found the two principal characters, Pio Valenzuela, who praises the ilustrado as "cultured" and who lacked "radical consciousness and populist ideology." Rather than viewing the ilustrados and their world from a 20th-century "proletarian ideology and a rigid class or caste" interpretation, Bayer tries to see from political dynamics through "traditional lines, ring politics." His focus is on the conflict within the "privileged class" because, he says, "it is only when we already quarreling among ourselves even then and whenever said issues couldn't be peace? The author adds it "that from inclination to create harmony over personalities rather than ideas." Based on reasons, he tells us that we may adopt a more "sympathetic" point of view.

The ilustrados moves from the end of the Galleon Trade that marked the beginning of economy self-reliance for the Spanish colony to a brief boom time-chapter) into the growing of sugar and tobacco. The lack of self-reliance that they decided to air "Stop to inspiration," news footage and extraordinary interspersed with inspirational song performances. I understand "Stop" will air for a week, while Revillame does his rounds, but I expect "Pinoversion" will be back on the air soon, or wherever the station hosts first the air has donated and it can go about its usual business.

viewing the ilustrados and their world from a 20th-century "proletarian ideology and a rigid class or caste" interpretation, Bayer tries to see from political dynamics through "traditional lines, ring politics." His focus is on the conflict within the "privileged class" because, he says, "it is only when we already quarreling among ourselves even then and whenever said issues couldn't be peace? The author adds it "that from inclination to create harmony over personalities rather than ideas." Based on reasons, he tells us that we may adopt a more "sympathetic" point of view.

The ilustrados moves from the end of the Galleon Trade that marked the beginning of economy self-reliance for the Spanish colony to a brief boom time-chapter) into the growing of sugar and tobacco. The lack of self-reliance that they decided to air "Stop to inspiration," news footage and extraordinary interspersed with inspirational song performances. I understand "Stop" will air for a week, while Revillame does his rounds, but I expect "Pinoversion" will be back on the air soon, or wherever the station hosts first the air has donated and it can go about its usual business.

those who would steer them that Semillera, and not Rizal, should be the National Hero because Rizal was "an elitist—and a pacifist at least who arouse as Spanish and openly espoused pacifism against the exercise of a revolution in the Philippines." He, even among them there was no revealing the moral and mentality.

With regard to the major characters that populated the 19th-century stage, those given brief sketches are of their background and their family, no such clear historical players, the information is both interesting and useful. Bayer is kinder in his assessment than both Zaide and his Delfin-named "A Question of Heroes." While Luna and Hidalgo were the first to challenge and will against what they perceived to be Spanish injustices in the social arts, it was Rizal who proved that a master-bil novel in Castilian could be written by a Filipino.

Hence, historic conflicts and their results are explained in light of personalities involved and not understood and the enemies of the Filipino. Behind the name-makers of the Propaganda Movement, La Liga Filipina, the problems with publications like La Solidaridad and España on Filipino nationalism the weaknesses of our people (always the particular issues) and the "Filipino" (rather than the general), the lack of unity, the petty intrigues and jealousies. Even without reading the similarity, the reader can conclude that present-day problems that bedevil the country have their roots in our inability to understand the past.

Dr. La Valle Pinoversion-chair that they got really sell only 100 copies of their publications. Considering their watered-lately, this is a serious depressing figure. But even worse is the thought that on how would have a chance to understand the ilustrado and his real contribution to our country.

* * *

Comments at lamhilus@yahoo.com

Notice to Youngblood contributors:

Send your contributions by e-mail to youngblood@sunstar.com.ph, together with your address, age and the school, course and year you're enrolled in or, if employed, the position you're holding and the company you work with. Contributions to Youngblood should not have been previously published.

The INQUIRER is a member of the PHILIPPINE PRESS INSTITUTE

Dancing with the President

IN HIS LETTER TO THE EDITOR (PDI, 1/23/06), Rolando Q. Santiago answers to be a well-educated person, having done research fellowship in Germany and studied Canadian politics, senses that he would rather dance with the "devil I know" (meaning Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo) than with the "devil and evil" (meaning the Marcos regime, Edsa II and the opposition allied with Joma Sison).

If Satanás had been given moral life, probably in a pact with the devil like Dr. Faustus, he would have danced the night away to the devil's temptations at the top of the mountain, danced with the Pharaoh as a Jewish slave rather than join Moses in crossing the Red Sea to freedom, sang with Nero and Caligula while they burned Christians at the Roman forum, reflected with Torquemada on the wise of the thousands he had tortured and murdered during the Inquisition, waltzed with King George as he tried to suppress the American revolution, partied with Marie Antoinette and King Louis XIV while the French people starved and rose in revolution, embraced our Spanish rulers in exorcising Rizal and fighting Bonifacio, hailed Hitler, admired Mussolini and applauded Tojo during their fascist reign and racial victories in World War II, and danced the samba with Pinochet, the tango with Fedric and Imelda, as he would dance the Cha-cha with GMA.

You don't dance with the devil—any devil. You overthrow or defy him or he. People who are oppressed, who are victimized by injustice and exploitation, who are deprived, have a right and a duty to overthrow their oppressors and deceivers, if not for their own sake, for the sake of their children and future generations. What if the slaves of the American south had sided with the devils and "devil I know"—masters—and not joined the anti-slavery forces of the North during the American civil war?

Progress—social, political and economic—comes with change. We should not be afraid of change. Some bad governments. Things may be worse in the short run, but they would be better in the long run. That is the verdict of history.

—MANUEL E. ALMARIO,
mfalmario@yahoo.com

Against GMA, Drilon has more to lose than gain

SIMEON DONOHUE SIPIN-OS-ly made some biased observations on the mood of the Liberal Party asking President Macapagal-Arroyo to resign. (PDI, 1/29/06)

The LP position was approved by the majority of the members of its directorate. The party, as a **democratic organization, adheres** to the majority rule. However, based on its liberal democratic principles, the LP also allows the individual members to express and hold on to their dissent as a matter of conscience. Thus, the party maintains unity in diversity.

The LP Manila chapter's celebration of the party's 60th anniversary held separately from that of the LP national committee, did not mean that the party is divided by factionalism, as Sipin-os suggested. The LP Manila Chapter celebration was like any of the local LP celebrations held in other cities and provinces.

The party decision to ask Sen. Drilon to resign was based on what is considered the best interest of the country. Senate President Franklin Drilon agreed with the decision, which gives with the people's sentiment as shown by a survey indicating that about 80 percent of the Filipinos want GMA to resign. (Pulse Asia, The poll also showed that Drilon, incumbent LP president, has the highest positive net approval rating among legislative leaders.

Sipin-os noted that some LP members have conflicting ambitions for the presidency. This is normal in any political party and that is why there are party conventions to resolve such issues. The LP is proud that it has many leaders who are qualified to be presidents. I consider Donohue's observation—that the LP leadership is "top heavy"—as a compliment.

Sipin-os presented a personal motive on the part of Drilon for supporting the party decision. Should Drilon disregard his principles and belief and join us on the issue on the ground that his decision might be questioned, because under the Constitution he is third in the line of presidential succession? This would be shameful for his duty and betrayal of his conscience.

Donohue also claims that Drilon's hold on the Senate presidency has become "precarious." This is a baseless assumption. The Senate president commands to enjoy the support and confidence of the majority of the members of the Senate, including those who are with the administration party.

Drilon has more to gain in siding with the President just like the other politicians who support her regardless of the convicting evidence of massive election cheating, unbridled corruption and misgovernment. He have characterized her administration. In asking the President to resign, in accordance with the party's decision, the Senate president has risen, generally said his political career on the line.

—ANTONIO S. GALLARDO,
chief of staff,
Office of the Senate President,
6/F Senate of the Philippines,
GSIS Building,
Financial Center, Pasay City

SSS still studying proposed EPCIB-BDO merger

THIS IS IN REFERENCE TO THE letter of Amado Cabanes (PDI, 1/23/06) on the proposal of Sen. Jo De Ocio (EDSA Uniwide Bank to merge with Equitable PCIBank (EPCIB). The Social Security System (SSS) has a substantial stake in EPCIB.

Cabanes said, "It is ironic that Winston Garcia, president of the government Service Insurance System, which has only a little more one million members, should be the one to stand up for and protect the interests of SSS members, by appealing to the SSS to join the (SSS) in connection with BDO's bid to merge with EPCIB. The SSS and GSIS' combined shareholdings would certainly be able to command a good price. Unless the SSS member's are betrayed again for a third time."

Cabanes's opinion about the betrayal of SSS members is pure speculation. The SSS is not in a position to make any formal statement on BDO's offer to merge with EPCIB at this time because of a pending case in the Supreme Court involving an EPCIB shares.

But the Social Security Commission is studying BDO's proposal to merge with EPCIB. It still has to go through several rigorous and innovative studies by our investment group before it can be forced to be made on the proposal. Rest assured, however, the SSS will decide with prudence and with utmost concern for its more than 23 million members.

—JOEL S. MAGACHE,
assistant vice president,
Media Affairs Department
Social Security System,
East Avenue, Diliman, Q.

LETTERS

Parquinian's win: Is it worth all the rejoicing?

WHEREVER ELSEWHERE THEY talked to Romeo senator of Indian Caesar's triumphant entry into Rome. At the risk of being called a spoiler or a downsider, I dare ask the same question of the Ilocos own Manny Pacquiao's crown to the Philippines. Must care, I did not fan on Erik Morales, although I honestly thought he could win—as I did not see the hype in his training.

It was a win with the light that Pacquiao won. Morales was on the downhill—palace and fleeing in a non-major Olympic event.

Most of us love winners and popular personalities but only when they are for truths. There are targets down totally. Who will remember Velasco, Espinosa or the Red Boy from Barbarigan?

The Pacquiao boosthales only stoke to entertain and make us forget the unsolvable problems that have confronted us for so long. It brings to mind the "Thrills in Manila" and the Miss Universe pageant during the Marcos dictatorship.

Hate comes the tax dollar spectacle of pool boys donning gowns and sporting cat fighting to dingy streets in the hope of becoming another Pacquiao and escaping poverty. They are cleverly diverted from the real issues of their poverty and the most effective—and rewarding—which is not by becoming a boxing world champion.

A few days ago, a number of seventeen Filipino workers came back to the country with tales of horrors from their contract jobs where they had been forced to work by poverty at home. What has happened to their complaints? What will happen to those whom we have called heroes?

What comparable homes do we bestow upon the other OFWs whose dollar remittances have saved the Philippine economy when they return to the country?

Many among us are not overly overawed but also promised to being hypocritical. Hello, anyone? "Whatever rejoice? What consequences brings he home? What celebrations follow him to home, to parties in captive hotels his elected schools?"

—ALEXANDER S. MARQUEZ,
1239 Gen. A. Patonal St.,
Sta cruz, Metro Manila

Send back tourism bill to committee

WE WOULD LIKE TO EXPRESS our grave concern over Senate Bill No. 2139 which seeks to reorganize the Department of Tourism. We are sad to note that it was crafted without adequate consultation from stakeholders in the travel and tourism industry. The bill is now undergoing floor deliberations in the Senate en route to second and final reading.

Although the measure has some merits, it contains a number of provisions that could harm, instead of promote, tourism.

The USD "tourism fee" to be charged to tourists for every night of stay in hotels as proposed in the bill will be a burden to both tourists and hotels. Tourists already pay their tour packages in their countries of origin. The fee will be a separate additional surcharge at check-out time. On the other hand, the fee will force hotels to jack up their room rates and make them uncompetitive in the house region.

The bill also requires tourism enterprises to obtain not only several permits and licenses from local government units but also step up accreditation from the DOT. This will over regulate the industry and put tourism enterprises at the mercy of these agencies' arbitrary interpretation for corruption.

As far as travelers are concerned, tourism-related organizations have set up their own chain hotels to police their ranks and en-

The tragedy was bound to happen

ON THE NIGHT OF FEB. 3, I drove to the Philsports Arena (formerly Ultra) and saw the line of people swarming down 'ayala' Valle Verde Village. I also saw people dropping on the road. I was not joined or asked to stop. I asked a couple of people walking and that's when I found out a true because of the "Wowowee" show.

Pet were saddened to hear the following morning, Feb. 4, that more than 70 people, mostly el-

Leftists keep blaming gov't

I WAS BOUND BY THE LETTER (PDI, 1/31/06) of Bernadette Medina, Mayor, Sangguniang Kabataan (SK) federation president of Malabon City, who blamed the government for the recent stampede in the Philippine Arena, saying that poverty have the poor to resort to desperate deeds.

She live in a democratic country, she can write and tell those things she wish to do what they like, much as those so-called "congressmen" can do whatever they like to do. The poor people who went to ULtra have the right to join or not to join the game show. They went there on their own free will, notwithstanding the risks involved.

May I point out that those "big brains dispersalist" always blame the government for whatever tragedy, mishaps and blunders there is in the country? Why can't they help the poor and act like a Filipino, for a change?

This country will never progress if the communist keep on hacking up the wrong view. We need unity, not division.

I appeal to Ka Satur Ocampo, Ka Crispin Beltran and for the Filipinos who died fighting for a better life, open your minds, for as he realistic, nothing will prosper if we keep on fighting and engaging in too much posturing and killing on the altar of their unrealistic ideology.

—ROMEL BAZ,
romelbaz@yahoo.com

Research volunteers await arrival of humpback whales

Viewpoint A1

emerged from the water beside the research boat.

"The first time I saw it was a whale I was expecting to be scared," he says. "I was not. I was excited."

Alaskan feeding grounds

Each year, the warming of the waters surrounding the Philippine archipelago signals the arrival of humpback whales at the Babuyan Islands from their Alaskan and Russian feeding grounds.

About 50 kms north of Luzon, the Babuyan Islands is recognized as a region of high marine biodiversity.

Of the 10 species which comprise the marine mammals found in the Philippines, 14 can be found at Babuyan, including the humpback whale, sperm whale and bottlenosed dolphin.

Other marine mammals, such as illegal hunting and dwindling have threatened the global population of cetaceans. Humpbacks are listed as endangered under the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and the US Endangered Species Act.

Poorly documented

Until the late 1990s, the presence of humpback whales in the Philippines had been poorly documented. Although local communities in Babuyan were aware of the presence of the humpbacks, the Philippines lacked a formal research program to record the size and health of the population.

In 2000, WWF-Philippines began its research projects to collect data on the whales and to surmount the lack of government and private funding, the Humpback Whale Research and Conservation Project (HWRCP) has largely been powered by volunteer labor since it began.

While there is historical records of the area's migratory patterns, there were no skills relevant on the research, previous volunteers included visual artists, biologists, freelance photographers, fisheries graduates and mathematicians.

Ellen Ines, HWRC project officer for the HWRCP in Batan, first volunteered as a humpback volunteer after finding herself frustrated working as a computer scientist.

"There's no interaction. The computer does not talk back to you," she says.

Off to sea at 6 a.m.

Although his employers did involve some environmental applications, such as computer based mapping for urban planning, he says the humpback research project has offered him the opportunity to apply his skills at the grass-roots level.

Off to sea at 6 a.m., the research volunteers spend their days on a small chartered outrigger boat. When a whale is sighted, the crew and researchers are recorded by an underwater data recorder using the Global Positioning System (GPS).

A photographer also captures images of the whale's tail so that each animal could be identified. Each whale has a unique tail pattern, allowing researchers to track the movements of individual whales globally.

In seeking adventure, volunteers for the project must make sacrifices such as ditching the modern conveniences of city living.

Signs of success

"No text a boom; or a hot," says Ana. "Water comes from a manual pump and the toilet is just a hole which's see the sea."

Food supplies for the project's two month durations must also be brought in by boat at the start of summer.

Infrequent access to electricity makes computer data entry and internet with the outside world difficult. The sound system is of a still also in the region, however, has improved communications somewhat.

The hard work in data collection is finally beginning to show signs of success. Last summer, 58 individual whales were sighted compared to around 30.

Although sightings have increased, Ines believes that it is too early to analyze the results for any signs of population change due to the relatively short time span of the research.

Having focused on recording data about the whales in previous seasons, the HWRC project this year seeks to strengthen relationships with the local community through education programs.

Fulfillment

"When the numbers is poor ... we go into the whales and touch [the whales's blubber] about the importance of whales and other cetaceans," Ana says.

It is the kind of work that leaves no room to worry about the pay, Ines says used to do consultancy work with various international organizations. She says the Asian Development Bank and UN Development Program, has no regrets about embarking his dollar-paying jobs.

"Monetary reward is not an issue anymore. There is a certain fulfillment in this," says Ana, who is planning to take a break for a year to focus on the work, depending on the availability of funds.

"Volunteers will also gather underwater photographic data through surveys. Ana hopes to build a better understanding of the livelihoods of the Babuyan people and obtain previous of the environment.

Environmental education

"What the community needs up there is education," says Tanseco. "So that better land rules will be possible the most valuable resources, I can assist in the project."

On Feb. 14, the volunteer team of seven will meet. Months for the islands. Traveling north by bus to Aparri in Cagayan, then riding 1 hour by boat to Calayan. Once in Calayan or Calayan Islands, the volunteers will be based there until late April, breaking only for Holy Week.

Tanseco, who will be returning to Babuyan this summer, is excited about enjoying a more simple existence.

"I like the serenity," he confesses. "No noise, no traffic, no pollution."

Bartolo A. Reyes

IN THE KNOW

The 'singing' humpback whales

TO BE ACTIVE AND AUDIBLE IS HUMPBACK WHALE behavior in the family of rorquals, which is characterized by pleats running from the lower jaw to the belly and ribs on the back. The shape and composition of the humpback's blood fat are distinctive, just like human fingerprints.

A humpback whale hands on sound but seen to us. Its vocalization is up to 1.5 hours a day. Adult humpbacks weigh 25–40 tons. Females are usually larger than the males, measuring 11.7–15.2 meters, as opposed to the male's 11.2–14.6m. They reach sexual maturity by or six to 10 years. A female humpback usually gives birth every two to three years, after a one-year gestation period.

Interestingly, male humpbacks sing complex "songs" that last 10–30 minutes. Scientists found that whales in the North American Atlantic popular ion sing the same song as those in the North American Pacific population. The songs changes gradually every year.

Most humpbacks also follow a regular migration route, going to temperate and polar waters during summer for feeding, and to tropical waters during winter for mating and giving birth. They do at this at the edges of the world's oceans, making them vulnerable to whalers. Humpbacks, which are also slow swimmers, number only 30,000 to 40,000 despite being given protection status by the International Whaling Commission in 1966.

Cyrell L. Bonaobrera, PDI Research

Exec tells CBCP: Don't demonize mine industry

Viewpoint A1

Patrick Cardle, treasurer of the association, said the mining industry had taken exception to the pastoral letter of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) which characterized the industry because it virtually included minors among the logger/ gallery of gangs and "looting" lords.

"Mining people, who are mainly engineers and geologists looking for commercially basic, are angry that [what] ops are meddling in economic affairs similar to events that our national have. Jose Rizal described almost 100 years ago," Cardle said.

"[It's time the bishops realized that the future of Philippines depends a long game. Or are they just afraid of losing control of their flock?"

The bishops called for the repeal of the Mining Act of 1995 and urged President Macapagal-Arroyo "to recall all approved mining concessions and to suspend pending applications."

The Mining Act opened up the mining industry to foreign firms.

"The promised economic benefits of mining by these transnational corporations are outweighed by the destruction of communities, especially among our indigenous brothers and sisters, the risks to health and livelihood, and massive environmental damage," the CBCP said.

Only 29 bishops against

Cardle noted that only 29 out of the roughly 112 bishops present at the CBCP annual meeting were against mining, with 11 of them coming from Mindanao where the latest mining disaster, Lafayette's mine spill, occurred. The mine is on Rapu-Rapu Island in Albay.

Cardle said almost all of the 29 bishops opposed to mining were at least 70 years old.

"Rock is the one of the poorest regions in the country. For the industry, after decades of progress in this area, now the attention of the people to other immediate concerns and the bishops will lose their power base among the impoverished?" he said.

"Rizal Mines must said that religion is the opium of the people. The poor at this site, the more they need their religion," Cardle said. "But why limit mining to Rizal? Why not impoverish the whole country?"

Deuteronomy

Cardle said that even the Bible urges the people to partake of nature's wealth.

"In Deuteronomy chapter 8, verses 6 to 10, the Lord describes the Promised Land as 'a land that produces without end'where grapes, figs, pomegranates, olives and honey. There you will never go hungry or you'll be in need. In rocks have iron in them, and from its hills you can mine copper. You will have all you want to eat and you will praise the Lord your God for the fertile land he has given you,'" he said.

Cardle wondered why the bishops' undermining views were not shared by their counterparts in Catholic countries in Latin America, like Chile and Peru, that derive a big chunk of their income from mining.

He said that if the Church wanted the mining industry to be accountable for the environment, it should likewise be held accountable for the poverty in the country.

"The mining industry is a highly regulated industry and the mining concessionaires are made accountable even for features of what happened to Stonepeak Cat the bishops also be held accountable if there minimizing unjust driven away by rapacious investors?" he said.

Cardle quoted Bishop John Lahoyen in saying that the Church's opposition to mining was not based on scientific grounds but "on moral considerations due to human rights violations."

"I had never associated mining activities in light of human rights violations. Of course, there are accounts like that of Marcopper in Marinduque, [but this was not caused by a deliberate and willful act of a human person against his fellowmen]," Cardle said.

The Chamber of Mines of the Philippines announced last week that it was willing to hold a dialogue with the CBCP over the pastoral letter.

DENR to junk 7 applications for mining concessions

By Blanche S. Rivera

THE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT and Natural Resources announced yesterday that it would junk the applications for mining concessions filed by seven mining companies.

Environment Undersecretary for Mining Bienvenido Brimbuelas said the government was preparing to send out orders for cancellation to Cordillera Exploration Co., Phil. Minerals Corp., Pinandoc Gramos and Mining Corp., International Pioneer Inc., Antaclan Chemical Industries Inc., Ignatius Mining Corp. and Hinabla Ridson Mineral Corp.

The seven companies had applied for Financial or Technical Assistance Agreements (FTAA), a contract between the Philippine government and mining companies for the large-scale exploration and development of minerals.

The cancelled FTAA applications covered a total area of 346,245 hectares. Upon recommend for 47.2 percent of the

Viewpoint A1

Cabinet appointees face rough sailing at CA

of the UP Cabinet ng Bansa(Kabinetng Pilipino) brothers, to be a member of the board of directors of the Development Bank of the Philippines," Ermita said.

Nachura, the eighth to be appointed to the Supreme Court in days, replaced Melo Fellow Secretary, who was appointed Ombudsman last January.

A lawyer, Nachura had returned to private practice after he failed to win a third term in Congress in the 2004 elections. He has also been teaching law at San Beda College and Arellano University and conducting part-bar reviews in various universities.

Nachura said the cousin Cabinet appointments were preparations for a planned shift to the parliamentary system.

In for rough sailing

But Sen. Miriam Defensor Santiago said Puno and Reyes were in for rough sailing in the Commission on Appointments.

Santiago, an administration member of the CA and a known critic of Puno, said that a single no vote in the commission would mean Puno and Reyes' appointments.

"For Puno and Reyes, the chickens have come home to roost. In other words, just a single enemy that they made in their long and checkered careers, as long as that enemy is a member of the CA, has the power to put an end to all their political ambitions," Santiago said.

Santiago said Puno would have to explain his alleged "key role" in the so-called Jolo Hotel Operations Group, widely suspected of being as the source of "Operation Dagdag-Bawas" from padding and shaving votes for the 1992 presidential election, which Santiago lost to Fidel Ramos.

In 1999, Santiago exposed alleged irregularities in the P200-million Motorola radio deal, the P5.6-billion Mabuhay deal and the P16-million fraudulent purchases by the BIR, which Puno had headed at the time.

Santiago said Reyes "is taking a rough road" to confirmation because "until now," the faction of former President Joseph Estrada members is "organized grudge against the Supreme Armed Forces chief of staff who turned over the Armed Forces to so-called civil society" during the Edsa II revolt that ousted Estrada in January 2001.

Reyes, Estrada's first Sec. Jingoy Estrada, is a member of the CA.

Wrong man at DENR

Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr said Reyes "may be the wrong man" at the DENR when he had "widespread and much less interest" in the environment and natural resources.

"President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo owes the public an explanation why she placed Reyes, a military man, as DENR secretary when ideally and by tradition, this position should be held by a person who is an environmentalist by training and inclination," Pimentel said.

He said Malacañang wanted Puno at the DILG as the administration could "make use of his reputation as a 'political genius' and 'magician'" in mobilizing local government executives to support Charter change. "The main aim of which is to perpetuate President Arroyo in power despite doubts over her legitimacy."

He added that Reyes' DENR post was a "hallmark position" after Reyes rejected Malacañang's offer to appoint him ambassador to Washington.

Puno yesterday declared that he would be giving up his Congress seat just yet.

"I will ask the President to allow me to take my oath of office at DILG secretary after I have been confirmed by the Commission on Appointments," he said.

Cavite Rep. Gilbert Remulla said "Puno's appointment could be read as a sign that Malacañang did not want Charter change."

The lawmaker believed that despite Mr. Arroyo's wish to speed up the shift to a parliamentary system of government by June this year, Malacañang "is encouraging Puno to run for another Congress term."

Tanggi, which Puno heads as president, has not been supporting Cha-cha, according to Remulla.

People's initiative

Puno said Kampi, Mr. Arroyo's political party, favored the cutoff date for people's initiative to propose Charter changes.

"It's still the best option for reform," he said, but stressed that he was still open to a people's initiative to introduce specific amendments to the 1987 Constitution.

"It's one option," said the lawmaker, who is expected to spearhead the move by virtue of his position as local government secretary.

"I have been out of the DILG for almost five years now," said Puno.

"In my first task would be to hold a series of consultations with key officials of the DILG to find out what is the department's thrust in line with the President's agenda."

Not a payback

Puno took time to belie allegations that he was the political operator behind the recently campaign in the 2004 presidential election, and that his appointment was a political payback.

"I don't think anybody owes me anything. The President does not owe me anything, except the oaths she had been Assistant," he said, adding:

"I have nothing to hide. I have no agenda."

Puno said his being linked to those tremendous deals during his two-year stint at the DILG was "to be expected."

GMA allies twit 'meeting of strange bedfellows'

Viewpoint A1

"The thing speaks for itself," said Binay, grinning from ear to ear.

Silver the Hunt, Mrs. Aquino and Mr. Estrada shook hands. Then they all went to another small room for snacks," said Aquino's spokesperson Rafael Lopa.

Aquino, 73, was at the forefront of the campaign to oust Estrada, 68, in 2001. The Estrada meeting was the first time the two leaders came face-to-face.

Estrada, sensing a hung parliament, and likely stalemate, said what happened before "was over," that the "hatchet ... was already buried."

Bound by common desire

Estrada, who is facing plunder and perjury charges, consented to his detention center in Tanay, Rizal, yesterday after a five-day confinement at the AMC.

"They are strange bedfellows bound by a common desire to oust the President or at least those of them, however, are considered as stable options is to place the President," House Majority Leader Prospero Nograles said in a statement.

Nograles, who previously wanted to phase opportunists by opposition leaders and members because their declaration to unify but not desire indeed," Nograles said.

Deputy Speaker Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo said the four opposition leaders must have been hoping that they will lead political chaos.

"They are hoping against hope that they can still influence the public, but they are only entertaining false hopes," she said.

Salapuddin said the meeting showed that Cebuo was part of the problem and was really aiming for the presidency through an opposition attempt at a power grab.

'Drilon dreaming'

"Senator Drilon is dreaming. It's unfaithful thinking for him and the opposition to see the front-line give up the presidency because the people remain strongly behind Mrs. Macapagal-Arroyo," Salapuddin said.

Malacañang also dismissed Sunday's gathering.

"As this the first time this is happening? They have had a lot of shows of unity. They had been marching and holding rallies with each other, promising to people's court and all sorts of moves to throw out the President, but nothing has come out of it," said Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita.

"The last minute that President Arroyo has been in office for two years, she," Ermita said. *With reports from Nelson Flores, TJ Burgonio and Cid L. Cobangbang Jr.*

Across the NATION

Semirara spill: 364,000 liters of oil

By Hector P. Bergado
PDI Visayas Bureau

ILOILO CITY—THE VOLUME OF THE OIL SPILL OFF the coast of Semirara Island in Antique has reached 364,320 liters, according to the Coast Guard.

Capt. Arturo Olavario, Coast Guard commander for Western Visayas, said the figure was the result of a technique called "sounding," which measured the remaining volume of fuel left in the four tanks of the power barge.

He said the volume of oil spill was around a third of the total 874,079 liters carried by the power barge of the National Power Corp.

The Coast Guard estimates were higher than the 195,000 liters reported by the power firm because it was based on the report of field personnel, said Napocor spokesperson Dennis Gana.

He, however, maintained that the environmental volume of oil spill was less than 200,000 liters.

The Napocor power barge ran aground on Dec. 18 200 meters off Caite Siding in Barangay Semirara, one of three villages of the island, after encountering huge waves and strong winds.

The spilled bunker fuel has contaminated 136 hectares of mangroves, fishnet, fish and a half times the size of Luneta Park) and 10 sq km of marine life were found dead, part of a group of nine islands of Caluya, Antique.

The oil spill has also contaminated fish reservations and dangaid sea grasses and coral reefs. At least 10,000 residents have been affected.

The incident was considered the country's biggest oil spill ever.

The Special Board of Marine Inquiry (SBMI) will today begin preliminary hearings at the Coast Guard headquarters in Iloilo City to look into the cause of the grounding. The hearings are expected to last until Friday.

The four members board has summoned the captain of the barge that towed the barge, Napocor representatives and Coast Guard personnel.

The cleanup crew in Semirara has collected 15,000 sacks of contaminated materials, according to a Coast Guard report.

A team of researchers and scientists from the University of the Philippines in the Visayas (UPV) will conduct studies on the impact of the oil spill on the mangroves this week.

PREPAREDNESS
Members of the Light Reaction Battalion demonstrate their capabilities during counter-terrorism exercises in Fort Magsaysay during the visit of President Macapagal-Arroyo.

ROUNDUP

Suspected hijacker killed

CAMP VICENTE LIM, Laguna — Two men wearing ski masks shot dead the alleged leader of a group of hijackers in Barrio Sucol in Alaminos, Friday, police said. Jose Bareng, 31, a resident of Barangay Alaminos, General Trias, Cavite was almost in transit his Mazda car after visiting his roommate here at about 8 a.m. when the two unidentified suspects stood him at close range. It was not the victim's first encounter. At least five hijacking incidents in which this suspect's modus operandi is a gun to the victim's head were reported to police. The victim's bus companions told investigators that the gunmen had been receiving threats after supposedly spilling the beans on some bus and police officials involved in hijacking. Police said Bareng was suspected to be the head of a hijacking syndicate operating in commuter coaches from the Cavite area to Laguna.

Alexis Romero, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

DA-FAO grant for Quezon rehab

AGRICULTURE Secretary Domingo Panganiban turned over some P-25 million worth of farm inputs to the farmers of Real, Infanta and Gumaca in Quezon province as part of government support for the rehabilitation of areas devastated by Typhoon Yoyong (Winnie) in November. In a ceremony held Jan. 19 in Infanta, Panganiban was issued hand that the grant package, consisting of three tractors, 50 carabaos, 50 pigs and assorted planting materials, would be of help to the farmers, as it would help them recover from the August typhoon's devastation. The grant is a component of a DA-Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) project. Among those who witnessed the turnover were FAO representative Hamadoun Toure, Director Armando Dolipas of the National Disaster Coordinating Council, and DA regional director Dennis Araullo.

Guns for captives

ISABELA CITY — Government rebels holding the two road in captivity have been demanded firearms in exchange for the victims' release, the military said on Friday. Col. Eduardo del Rosario, commander of Task Force Basilan, said Leonardo Pérez's group demanded at least five M-14 rifles before freeing their captives, including a village councilor that they abducted on Jan. 28. Del Rosario said they would not negotiate with the rebels and soldiers have been sent to rescue the hostages.

Danilo Jay Garcia, PDI Mindanao Bureau

Co-op exec hurt in attack

CAMP VICENTE LIM, Laguna — Unidentified men shot and wounded an official of a farmers' cooperative in Batangas while he was sleeping at his house in Lower Iram before Thursday midnight, Senior Supt. Francisco Uba, Montenegro, Batangas police director, identified the victim as Ramon Calderon, 56, director of the Talisayan Farmers Cooperative and principal of Wawaodas National High School in Lower Iram.

Alexis Romero, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

P1.1B LOAN
Officials of the Development Bank of the Philippines recently signed a P1.2 billion loan to cover the unpaid accounts of the Metro Cebu Water District (MCWD) with the Local Water Utilities Administration. Shaking hands are the principal signatories in the loan deal—DBP head Reynaldo Daval (left) and MCWD board chair Juan Saul Hernandez (right).

Vizcaya gov defies Comelec ruling unseating her

BAYOMBONG, NUEVA VIZCAYA—Gov. Lutgardo Guaresma rejected for work on Friday despite an order by the Commission on Elections that collided her proclamation and directed her to vacate her post.

Guaresma said his lawyers have asked the Comelec en banc to reconsider the Jan. 31 decision of the poll body's first division and prevent its implementation.

"As you can see, I'm still the governor. It's a long way to go," she said.

In a resolution promulgated Tuesday, the Comelec declared lawyer Leonardo Byron Perez as the winner in the 2004 gubernatorial elections, over a second-placed 3,500 votes.

The poll body said the resolution is "immediately executory" due to the "proximity of the end of the term of the contested office."

The commission held a recount of ballots from the 100 precincts in Bambang, Dupax del Norte, Dupax del Sur and Kasibu towns, which Perez questioned in his protest.

He said votes cast in his favor in these precincts were either "misread or misappreciated" by the chairpersons of the boards of election inspectors.

Guaresma answered Perez's protest with a counterprotest of results from Bayombong, Solano and Bagabag towns.

The resolution has created confusion among residents here. Fueled by text messages which claimed that Guaresma left her office on Tuesday night and that Perez took over the post the next day.

Policemen have been sent to the provincial capitol grounds amid reports that supporters from both camps would hold rigid shows of strength on Monday.

Michelle Guanzon, PDI Sheriffs Jason Barroso

Probe of NBI agents' beating in Bacolod sought

By Carlo. F Gomez
PDI Visayas Bureau

BACOLOD CITY—JUSTICE Secretary Raul Gonzalez and Philippine National Police chief Arturo Lomibao have ordered an investigation of the beating of five National Bureau of Investigation and two Bureau of Immigration and Deportation agents allegedly by about 15 members of the Negros Occidental Police Office (NOPO) on Saturday.

"I will not allow this to pass unchallenged. this is a degree to the law enforcement profession," Gonzalez said yesterday.

He said charges would be filed against those responsible.

Lomibao had also ordered the Police Regional Office in Central Visayas (PRO-7), headed by Chief Supt. Edgar Galon, to investigate the incident, said PNP spokesperson, Chief Supt. Leopoldo Bataoil.

Galon has been directed to coordinate closely with the NBI in the investigation to determine the administrative and criminal liability of those involved, Bataoil said.

Investigation

Senior Supt. Melvin Ramon Buenafe, NOPO director, said he also ordered an investigation to determine if the allegations of the NBI in Bacolod were true.

But he added that reports reaching his office indicated that civilians were the ones who beat up the NBI agents and not the police.

A source from the NBI told the Inquirer that two BI agents from Manila, who went with the NBI team, suffered injuries in their faces.

An NBI agent was also in serious condition in a hospital in Bacolod due to a dislocated spinal column as a result of the beatings.

A team of NBI and BI agents, led by Special Investigator Abner Mañalaque, went to a golf and country club in Pamplona town, Negros Oriental to serve a search warrant on Fu Hai Sung, a Korean, for illegal possession of firearms. *With a report from Alex Pal, PDI Visayas Bureau*

Ex-senator says he's victim in Cavite land dispute

CALAMBA CITY—MOVE AGAINST and former Sen. Ramon Revilla Jr. yesterday denounced the claims of tenant-farmers who accused him of illegally evicting them from a 25-hectare agricultural estate in Silang, Cavite.

Revilla, who became famous for his "Robinhood" portrayals in the movies, likewise threatened to file libel charges against "those who continue to distort the facts and lend lies to the media."

He said the demolitions of the houses in Barangay Cubamgan last Friday was legal.

He said it was he, not the 42 families of farmers, who was stripped of the right to utilize the land which he legally owned.

"It is grossly unfair that (he) succumbing to their pleas, they would distort the facts to the media and portray me as the villain (when I and my family are the ones being deprived of lawful use of the property we purchased legally," Revilla said in a statement sent to the Inquirer, now the chair of the Philippine Reclamation Authority, said the Department of Agrarian Reform Adjudication Board (DARAB) ordered the farmers to vacate the property on April 8 2004, but the farmers won't respect the order. *With a report from Jhesse Pal, PDI Visayas Bureau*

16 soldiers get medals for Tarlac clashes

FTA. CONCIA, TARLAC—President Macapagal-Arroyo awarded on Monday the gold cross and wounded personnel medals to 16 government soldiers who took part in the Jan. 31 clashes with New People's Army rebels.

"Congratulations, your boss," the President told Lt. Col. Gregory Cayetano, commanding officer of the 7 1st Infantry Battalion, during ceremonies held atop a hill in Barangay Sta. Inez Weir here.

The reinforced but admittedly outnumbered troops of the 71st Infantry Battalion were ambushed by the rebels, who were reportedly led by Commander Ka Parago, on Jan. 31 in Barangay Sta. Inez Weir here.

Cayetano answered Perez's protest with a counterprotest of results from Bayombong, Solano and Bagabag towns.

The resolution has created confusion among residents here, fueled by text messages which claimed that Guaresma left her office on Tuesday night and that Perez took over the post the next day.

Policemen have been sent to the provincial capitol grounds amid reports that supporters from both camps would hold rigid shows of strength on Monday. *Michelle Guanzon, PDI Sheriffs Jason Barroso*

The ambushers have created confusion among residents here, fueled by text messages which claimed that Guaresma left her office on Tuesday night and that Perez took over the post the next day.

Policemen have been sent to the provincial capitol grounds amid reports that supporters from both camps would hold rigid shows of strength on Monday. *Michelle Guanzon, PDI Sheriffs Jason Barroso*

Stampede victim's kin recovers cash

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

TEARFUL TO AN HONEST WOMAN, a family has found a reason to be thankful despite their pain and loss.

Yesterday Cindy Lacuna, a volunteer of the Iloilig City Rescue Team, returned to the daughters of stampede victim Rosalie Bornes Soriano P49,000 in cash.

Soriano, 56, was among those killed during Saturday's stampede at the Philippines Arena (formerly Ulivi) in Pasig.

Lacuna said she was thinking the victims' bodies for identification cards. When she got to Soriano, she found the bundle of money in the woman's pocket.

"I was surprised. I had to look at the bundle closely to confirm if it was really money," Lacuna told reporters in Filipino.

Lacuna and other team officials turned over the money to Soriano's daughters, Lovinsky and Shirley, inside the office of Iloilig City Mayor Victorio Garrido.

Garrido said the City Council will pass a resolution to commend Lacuna and the rescue team.

Meanwhile, the mayor blamed the organizers of the ABS-CBN concertas show Wowowee, saying the security they provided was not enough to prevent the stampede.

"They should have anticipated that the crowd would swell. They should have changed their plans when they saw that the crowd exceeded the capacity of the arena," Garrido told the reporters yesterday.

Seventy-five persons, mostly elderly women, were killed in the stampede during what should have been a grand celebration of the first anniversary of Wowowee. More than 200 others were injured.

"The security groups of both the organizers and Ulivi should be held responsible," Garrido, a member of the fact-finding committee formed to investigate the tragedy said.

On the other hand, two other mayors, Sukiranda City Mayor Sherwin Gatchalian and Caloocan Mayor Enrico Echiverri, have promised to give financial assistance to the kin of their constituents who were killed in the stampede.

Five of the 74 killed came from Valenzuela while another five were from Caloocan City. With Nancy C. Carvajal

DREAMSCAPE
An old woman finds a perfect spot to take an afternoon nap on a sidewalk in Manila. Manila. (JR Nalog)

Total ban sought for QC flyover

By Tarra V. Quismundo

THE METROPOLITAN MANILA DEVELOPment Authority (MMDA) may ban trucks totally from the C.S. Kalaw-Quezon Flyover which had been weakened by a fire in December.

Should the ban be implemented, however, it would not be for safety reasons but because of traffic concerns.

"There are recommendations from different sectors in the Tandang Sora and Kalaw-Quezon area for the total ban of trucks possibly because traffic became lighter on the flyover," MMDA Traffic Operations Center (TOC) Executive Director Angelito Vergel de Dios told the Inquirer.

Trucks, or vehicles weighing over five tons, were temporarily banned from using the flyover in December after a final test the speed some 300 shanties built underneath the structure, making it terrible.

On Jan. 10, the MMDA and the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) closed down the flyover to all types of vehicles from 10 p.m. to 5 a.m.

The closure, which lasted for a week, was to allow DPWH engineers to determine how best to repair the infrastructure.

Vergel de Dios said businessmen, residents and school owners in Kalaw-Quezon have asked the agency to implement a total ban on trucks using the flyover once the repairs have been completed. They said the MMDA that traffic has become lighter in the area due to the truck ban.

"We are not considering it yet, but there are recommendations...how? was [the traffic situation] has improved in Kalaw-Quezon because the trucks were diverted to other roads... Naturally, traffic would ease up," said the traffic chief, affirming the observation.

Vergel de Dios said they would hold consultations with truckers' groups and the Quezon City government before deciding whether or not to enforce the ban.

"So [MMDA Chair Bayani Fernando] said, we should not restrict the movement of trucks because they are the backbone of trade, carrying important goods. We would implement truck bans, but we should provide alternate roads that are, as much as possible, parallel to where they are banned," he added.

The DPWH has started repairing the flyover, installing additional concrete beams to damaged underbelly. Vergel de Dios said not any where repair work would be complete all although he added that the department had initially said it would take about a month. Trucks, most of which come from Commonwealth Avenue en route to factories in Pasig and other destinations south of Manila, have been using alternate routes since they were banned from the flyover.

ABS-CBN to blame for the tragedy

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo

SOMEBODY WANTED GMA-BOSS'S TRAGEDY to happen. Neither ABS-CBN, nor the bigwigs around it, inside the Ulira, denied it.

But the tragedy could have been prevented had the country's biggest media TV network taken steps to manage the crowd.

In its eagerness to overtake rival network GMA-7 in ratings game, ABS-CBN tried to lure more than it could chew. It got gagged on overexpertise.

For example, the Wowowee organizers knew that only a certain number of people would be accommodated at the Ulira. But why didn't they turn away the excess crowd after the full-capacity number was reached?

Why didn't they tell the people who could no longer be taken in, "Sorry, but the place can take in only such-and-such a number of people. Better luck next time."

The show's organizers should be held accountable for negligence.

* * *

Some people blame show host Willie Revillame for the tragedy.

Hello! Bet Blame is only a titled. He runs the show before the camera. Off camera, he doesn't have any say on how the show should be managed.

I sympathize with Willie. He had given everything to make the show a success—and it is—for the tragedy happened.

So would he replaced with a dole where the complainants and the police officer could have recourse level interaction," Dr. Jesus said.

He said there will also be provided in order not to aggravate a victim's condition and fears of mind.

The order to get rid of elevated complaint desks in all Caloocan stations came from NPO Director Chief Supt. Raul Gonzales in line with the Philippine National Police's campaign to gain the public's trust.

Dr. Jesus said reasons that the complaints desk are manned by policemen who are police and accommodating, the PNP will step the services of a firm that trains the crew of two police-trained consultants on how to deal with the public.

"The policemen must have the correct attitude to encourage victims to learn to trust the policemen," he added.

While he was campaigning in a Nueva Ecija town, the market burned. Governor Gabriel Dick Gordon got down from his vehicle and managed the firefighting operations.

Giving a helping hand to victims of tragedy is second nature to Dick.

I remember an anecdote about Dick in the aftermath of the 9th Pinatubo eruption. A civic group from Manila went to Olongapo to hand over to food and used clothing for Dick for victims of the disaster.

The group brought along a TV crew and seven photographers for the occasion. The group wanted their generosity published in the national papers and seen on TV.

Dick Gordon didn't attend the ceremony highlighting the donations received from the civic group. He said later he believed generosity should never be made public.

"If you give financial help to the loss of your brothers, why make a public show of it?" he said.

* * *

The government-run Rizal Medical Center brought out the best it could offer in treating the Ulira tragedy survivors, and handling relatives of those who died.

The RMC acted with enthusiasm and efficiency even with its unfinished renovation.

I say "unchanacterbelle" because several doctors and nurses in that Pasig hospital didn't give comfort and proper care to poor patients who sought treatment there.

Perhaps the RMC staff has changed. And that's welcome news.

Down with elevated complaints desks

By Nancy C. Carvajal

COMPLAINANTS TROOPING TO POLICE stations in the Caloocan (Caloocan Malabon-Navotas-Valenzuela) area will no longer have to scale their necks when they stand before the desk officer.

Senior Supt. Ramon de Jesus, Northern District (ND) Police Relations Office, said the elevated complaints desk in all their police stations will be taken down and replaced with one that would put the complainant "on the same level" as the officer on duty.

"So would be replaced with a desk where the complainants and the police officer could

More infra projects lined up for Navotas

MORE INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS FOR Navotas are ready to take off this year, according to Navotas Rep. Toby Tiangco.

A report from the Municipal Engineering Office showed that among the top priority projects to be implemented in the first quarter of the year are the construction of a river wall and pumping stations in Barangays Navotas East, Daanghari, San Roque, San Rafael Village and Kapitbahayan.

The pumping stations proved to be effective in flood-prone Barangays Bagumbayan, Sipac-Almacen and San Jose. Dagat-Dagatan and Kaunlaran. Because the flooding in these areas have ceased, Tiangco noted.

The development of the Navotas Commercial Park is in full swing, together with the improvement of the town's playgrounds, parks, landscaping and installation of lights along C-4 road, the construction of Police Community Precincts along B-10 Road, repair work and improvements of classrooms in District I and II, and the Navotas Transport Terminal.

More to come

Other projects lined up are the construction of sidewalks and of the repair of the drainage canals, apart from the installation of playground equipment and the building of more basketball and volleyball courts.

METROBRIEFS

11 suspected robbers arrested in Diviseria

THE IMMEDIA Police District (MPD) arrested 11 suspected robbers in Barangay Diviseria area over the weekend upon the request of the Chinese-Filipino community to reduce crime in the Binondo district. The suspects were identified as Federico Arcenia, Ronnel Sese, Alexander Reyes, Rodrigo Bulloni, Rovino Catalbas, Jhonny Gonzales, Antonio Lato, Arvin Gonzales, Daniel Tanada, Mike Enriquez and Leonardo Durian. Subang said the MPD has started conducting due process with the suspects in order to determine if they have other pending cases. "This anti-crime operation is part of our campaign to crack down on lawless criminals, including wanted persons, as per Let of the MPD's 'Ay Yan Series. ... Police na Malaya, Para na Matrito' and 'Sabihin na Dibuena' programs," Barangay said in a statement. **Margaret C. Orig**

Ka Popoy remembered on 5th death anniversary

MORNING Gana leader Filemon "Ka Popoy" Lagman was honored yesterday in simple rites held at the exact spot where he was killed five years ago by an assassin's bullet. His family and members of his party-list group, the Partido ng Manggagawa (PM), offered wreaths and lit five black candles in tribute to his memory at the shrine standing in the Rotonda ng Mandaluyong at the University of the Philippines Diliman campus. Lagman, a revolutionary socialist, was killed on Feb. 6, 2001, and he came the first prominent victim of political assassination under the administration of President Macapagal-Arroyo. Mitos Ilao, Lihat Lagman lamented that his brother's case has yet to be solved. "When he was killed, the administration promised it would pursue his case with alacrity. Now, alacrity has taken five years," he said. If Lagman were alive today, he would likely be fighting against the anti-terrorism bill and moves to amend the Constitution, the congressman added. **DJ Yap**

New book on community health nursing out

THE UP College of Nursing, in collaboration with National Book Store, will launch today the book "Community Health Nursing: The Basics of Practice" at the UPCN campus on Pedro St. Manila. The book is intended to be a textbook for nursing students and a reference book on public health nursing. It seeks to impart the what, why and how of community health nursing and provide a theoretical framework and foundation for practice for beginning community health nursing practitioners. The book was written by Salvacion G. Ballon-Reyes, a long-time public health nurse educator with extensive experience in community health nursing here and abroad. An alumna of the UP College of Nursing, Ballon-Reyes has a masters degree in public health from the Johns Hopkins University School of Hygiene and Public Health in Baltimore, Maryland, USA, and another in education from the UP. She also served as a consultant for the World Health Organization in Sri Lanka.

People's Choice
SUPER BRAND
SUPER BRAND GOLD 2006
SUPER BRAND PLATINUM 2004
SUPER BRAND GOLD 2003
SUPER BRAND GOLD 2002
SUPER BRAND GOLD 2001
SUPER BRAND GOLD 2000
SUPER BRAND GOLD 1999
PILOT
Experience the Ultimate writing instrument
V5 & V7 Hi-Tecpoint
PILOT Hi-Tecpoint V5 Fine
BX-V5 BX-V7
Unique stainless steel pen tip with a micro ball to the tip wrote writing. Ultimate Smooth
Philippine Exclusive Distributor
COSMOS BAZAR, INC.
PILOT CORPORATION Tokyo Japan

E-mail: pi_metro@inquirer.com.ph
METRO
The inquirer Handbook:
Inquirer now serving/reaching coverage in 2307 (Cebu) or 384 (Davao)
Editor Rolen G. Dipasupil

Wayward van kills 2 pedestrians

By Cj Yap

A SPEEDABLE DIESEL ELF VAN ALLEGEDLY driven by a drunk man left a trail of death and destruction in its wake in Quezon City last Sunday.

Two men were killed and at least three vehicles were damaged, as the van driven by Raul Bello, 28, plowed through them in a series of alleged hit-and-run incidents that began at 11:30 p.m., and ended in his arrest. The van first hit an FX taxi along the Quezon Avenue underpass, but continued on its way pursued by the taxi, according to traffic police. When it reached Commonwealth Avenue, the van bumped another vehicle, this time, a white pick-up. Still, the van did not stop. Quezon City Traffic Investigation Division (TID) Senior Insp. Nicanor Joven said, the added that as the van got to the North Fairview High School, it hit Dominga Fajardo and his uncle Eusebio Siena Jr. as they were crossing the road. Both victims died on the incident. The suspect kept driving, until he rammed into a delivery van loaded with cigarettes in front of the Pan Bicam Comedy Bar at the corner of Regalado Street and Mindanao Avenue Extension.

Disoriented and apparently drunk, Bello was pulled out of the van, along with his wife, cousin and nephew who sustained only minor scratches and bruises.

EARLY START
A boy paddles his makeshift raft on Manila Bay to collect garbage he and his friends can recycle for sale to the junkman.

Robinsons Supermarket

NOW OPEN!

Come and Celebrate with us!

PREMYONG PABUENAS
Grab a chance to WIN EXCITING PRIZES
February 7 - March 15, 2006

4-day Crazy Sale
Enjoy Big Discounts!
February 7 - 10, 2006

REGALO BAWAT RESIBO
GET GROCERY GOODS FOR FREE!
March 17 - April 16, 2006

VICINITY MAP

Nagaland E-Mall
Peñafrancia Ave., Cor. P. Diaz St. Naga City

Dorm 'lessees' face raps

By Tina G. Santos and Margaret C. Deriz

THE MANILA CITY GOVERNMENT HAS FILED charges against the tenants of a two-story boarding house where eight people were killed in a fire last month.

Charged in the City Prosecutor's Office were Guido Monteiro and his wife, Teresita, and Nicanor Zamora, the tenants of the house at 833 F. Carmen Street in Sampaloc, Manila.

In the complaint-affidavit filed by City Administrator Candelario Noble, the three were charged with violating City Ordinance No. 4702 which prescribes the rules and regulations for the operation and maintenance of boarding houses and dormitories in the city.

No permit

Noble said the three did not have the requisite mayor's permit for operating a boarding house.

A check with the city's Business Promotion and Development Bureau also showed that the tenants had no business permit.

Arson investigator 0[illegible] Guillermo Fernandez said the Monteiros had occupied the ground floor of the building for 10 years.

Zamora, on the other hand, had rented out 10 rooms on the second floor that served as a dormitory for transients.

Transients

"The transients were mostly students who reviewed for board examinations and stayed there for a few months," Fernandez said.

Zamora said her family reportedly went to their home in the province shortly after the incident.

He added that Zamora also owned the kitchen on the first floor where the fire originated.

Other tenants

"The Monteiros family on the other hand, leased out a portion of the area to a sauce refilling station, "Fernandez said.

The building is owned by the heirs of Jose Mendiola who had rented out the building to the three tenants.

According to the arson investigator, the Mendiola family represented by the Bersoza Law Office, told the Manila Fire Department that their contract with Monteiros and Zamora had "specified that the latter should not loan out the property to other tenants."

Not so fast

"But the heirs of Jose Mendiola are not yet off the hook," Fernandez told the bureau in a phone interview, explaining that the owners had the responsibility to check on their tenants.

"It is appalling if they had not inspected their properties for that long a period," he said.

Of the eight persons killed in the Jan. 8 fire, two were women. Seven of those who were killed shared a room on the second floor.

About 11 families lived in the boarding house, apart from other tenants who occupied 15 rooms on the second floor.

Bounty for fishers

By Jocelyn R. Uy

THE MUNTINLUPA CITY GOVERNMENT has stepped up its assistance to fishermen who were affected by the massive fishkill late last year in Laguna Lake.

In a statement issued yesterday, City Hall announced that after its clean-up drive, the Lake Management Office (LMO) will restock another batch of carps and tilapia fingerlings next month in the lake to replenish the harvest of fishermen, particularly those living in Barangay Putatan.

Mayor Jaime Fresnedi has also allocated P275,000 to about 55 fishermen affected by the incidents.

SPORTS

E-mail: sports@inquirer.com.ph

Editor Teddyboy S. Molondres

WHAT'S INSIDE

Hard work pays off for Tangkay /A20

Rockets' blast downs Knicks /A21

Steelers steal Super Bowl 40 /A21

Olympic body to summon table tennis head /A20

Pacquiao Pinoy 'Cinderella Man' /A21

SMB swaps Belasco for Cablay

By Jun Navarro

SAN MIGUEL BEER FOUND another crack guard and Alaska another power forward after the Boerrmen traded Nic Belasco for Brandon Cablay yesterday.

The item also dipped rookie center Mark Sta Ana to SMB as part of the deal, which was confirmed by Alaska team manager Jonjo Tello yesterday.

SMB coach Joey Dichoso said Cablay will be groomed as understudy of big playmaker Glenn Rizada who, at 31, is considered near the twilight of a career that helped Globe win an Philippine Basketball Association titles.

"But we still don't know how Brandon will fit in until we see him in practice," said Dichoso, who also has great guards Clemente Lopez, Jayvee Villoria and rookie Paolo Mendoza at his disposal.

BELASCO: Physicality and experience

CABLAY: Perfect backup for Rizada

Belasco, a tough defender and rebounder with a respectable three-point shooting touch, joins its Alaska squad already loaded with veteran up front.

Aside from Jim Alibalo and Peejay Bringuelo, the ace also beat Joaquin Divina, Tony dela Cruz and 2005 Rookie of the Year Rich Alvarez.

"We were looking for mentality and a more experienced player while Sta Miguel now has a young and quick point guard," said Tello. "I think Nic will gladly fit in."

A first-rounder in the 2000 draft, Cablay the slam dunk champion in 2004, was actually San Miguel's top choice before it saw Jeaneo by the item, who made the Utensil-voted playmaker the fifth overall pick.

"We're all right with him (Cablay), but this's allowed will definitely create a big door on our frontline rotation," said Dichoso.

With a bulking 6-foot-7 frame, Sleng can be groomed to fill the void left by Belasco. But it will take time before the former Illinois and Adamson University Intimidator could be relied upon.

On the Aces' end, the departure of Cablay will leave Mike Cortes, Jeffrey Cariaso and the seldom-used Stephen Dedilla to keep the Alaska backcourt competitive.

The lack of a veteran frontliner and an offensive import in the event as second-year is in the Fiesta Conference after Red Bull comes down in their quarterfinal series.

Sta. Miguel also got booted out by a younger and bolder Ace2. Jayvee is their wild card concession.

Giants tough, if not tougher, says Guiao

GAME TOMORROW (Araneta Coliseum)
4:30 p.m.—Ateneo vs. Letran (for third place)
7:30 p.m.—Purefoods vs. Red Bull

Sweeping Giants squad fueled by the support of the 15,000-crowd, Red Bull coach Yeng Guiao still thinks the series is far from over.

"Playing against Giants is like losing an extra player," Guiao said yesterday during the pre-finals media briefing at the Puerto Azul on Ermita in Manila. "But it doesn't mean things will be easy for us in the finals."

The Bulls finally eliminated the Kings Sunday, 83-79, in action against the well-rested Purefoods Chunkee Giants starting Wednesday in another best-of-seven series for the title.

"Purefoods has a different style which is far from Barako's brand of play so we have to use a different strategy this time," said Guiao.

While Barako's strength lies on the post, the Giants rely mainly on their veteran gunners, led by prolific import Marquise Chandler.

The Giants finished off the Ark21 Express in six games while the Bulls had to go through the savage of a Game 7 against the Kings.

Purefoods coach Jun Gregorio, however, doesn't believe that Giants possess any edge despite coming off a five-day respite.

"It helps but it's quite different in the finals playoffs," said Gregorio. "It's a long series and teams have more time to fine-tune their strategies and adjustments every minutes."

But compared with the Giants, the Bulls will have a tougher time adjusting.

"We did not have practice today, but we have to make adjustments in defense," said Guiao. "That's tougher for us, to rebounding, not defense in just one day's time."

Jun Navarro

National Prisaa Games get going in Lingayen

By Yolanda Sonio-Fuertes
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

LINGAYEN, PANGASINAN—THE PRIME SCHOOLS Athletic Association (Prisaa) National Games opened here on Saturday with President Macapagal-Arroyo as guest of honor and speaker.

Addressing more than 3,000 athletes, guests and school officials, the Arroyo exhorted the schools to produce more athletes who can compete internationally.

"My celebrates Manny Pacquiao," Ms Arroyo told the delegates from the country's 16 regions at the Narciso Ramos Sports and Civic Center here. "We celebrate the Southeast Asian Games (winners). Now we celebrate the athletic schools."

According to Prisaa national chair Ed Fernandez's figures, a total of 3,005 athletes are vying in 11 events to be held in this capital town, Mankayan and Da cities of Dagupan, Alaminos and San Carlos. It is the first time in 10 years that these regions is hosting the Prisaa Games.

Another highlight of the opening rites was the presentation of awards of recognition to Prisaa athletes who competed and won in last year's 23rd NSAC, where the Philippines emerged as overall champion.

Prisaa national president and vice chair of the board Dr. Consuelo Chapar gave the awarding rounds while Lingayen Mayor Ernesto Gutierrez, Dagupan City Mayor Benjamin Lim, Rep. Amado Espino II and Pangasinan Gov. Oscar Aglipay-Lopez also delivered messages.

Ms Arroyo said her administration wants to keep the prime schools after "so we are giving vouchers to students who want to enroll in private schools."

Under the administration's P55 billion pump priming program, P500 million has been allocated for athletic drips. A student can enroll of a P4,000 voucher each year except for those in private school.

Ms Arroyo handed out 50 vouchers each to elementary schools in Calasiao(one), Mangaldan, Mapandan, Bugaoy, Mankayan, Sta. Barbara, Urdaneta, Binmaley and Dagupan City.

PBL MVP

Hard work pays off for Tangkay

By Jasmine N. Paya

RUNNERS-UP MENTS CAME APLENTY DESPITE a promising career

Sir Jojo Tangkay vowed to work harder and expects nothing else a forgettable stint in the pros. Worse, he was sidelined by an ACL injury.

Both in the amateur ranks, the Sta Rosa Lions baseball standout's name were heartbreak. He suffered injury in a controversial war for the Most Valuable Player award in the 2004 Philippine Cup.

But at 29, Tangkay showed that it's never too late to start all over.

Last Sunday, the 6-foot, 1-inch rugged hitter MVP plum in the PBL Fiesta Cup.

"I didn't expect to win the MVP. This time because in the past conferences, I had big expectations of getting the award," said Tangkay in Filipino. "But I guess it (the MVP award) wasn't really meant for me then."

Apart from receiving the top individual honor in the conference title wins also settles Tangkay's teach after the Elasto Painters edged Gin Magnolia Wizards in Game 2 of the Finals series.

Thirty-or-three will direct for a sweep in Game 3 of the best-of-five series on Thursday.

The Painters claimed Game 1 after a thrilling 70-68 overtime win last Thursday. There days later, the seasoned squad again proved mettle to down the wizards in a 75-73 decision.

"My next goal is to win the championship for my team," said Tangkay, who captured the MVP plum with 344.80 total points after topping the statistical points and the player-involved vote.

He was was also named to the Mythical Five along with Jason Castro of Talpers (921 [270.42] points), Magnolia's Kelly Williams (259.63) and Arwind Santos (255.83), and teammate Jay-R Reyes. (224.06).

The league also featured Defensive Centers Rich Reyes (222.50) and Joseph Yeo (22.8.28), Depex (CX's Calvin Pagnaw (212.47) and Rohen Cruz (202.73) and Rookie Dale Encinas (217.02) as members of the All-PBL second team.

JOJO Tangkay (left) shows it's never too late to shine again. Jose Mercado

Olympic body to summon tablenet head

By Marc Anthony Reyes

THE PHILIPPINE OLYMPIC COMMITTEE WILL summon table tennis chief Mr Velbusta to explain his alleged accusations made by former secretary general Oscar Santillan that he was elected illegally.

POC secretary general Steven Hontiveros said Velbusta's explanation is needed before the Olympic body can form a committee that will decide the merits of the case.

"Right now we have to give everybody a chance to explain," said Hontiveros of Velbusta, who was sworn in by no less than the POC president Peping Cojuangco recently.

He added that the case doesn't have to be decided by the general assembly or by the arbitration body headed by POC chair Robert Aventajado.

Santillan claims to have the backing of some regional directors and other officials of the Table Tennis Association of the Philippines (Tapi) an earlier player, claimed that Velbusta was fraudulently elected in a new term. Santillan pointed out that, among other things, Velasco is no longer registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission.

But Velbusta has denied that and instead accused Santillan of getting back at him following his ousting from Velasco's years ago.

Konica connection

THE CONNECTION BETWEEN GUIARD Canada and Konica Minolta is golf.

So, beginning today Guiard, the former junior standout who is now a successful golf coaches and Konica Minolta, the world leader in digital imaging, renews their bond on the fairways of the historic golf Club in Silang, Cavite—today being the Celebrity Tournament of the Konica Minolta National Pro-Am set for 8-11 at Riviera Cavite.

"In all my years in here and around the world golf courses," Guiard says, "the once in Konica Minolta are the most memorable."

Guiard and his amateur partner, JE Tanpinco, won the tournament back to back in 2004 and 2005 (the event wasn't held in 2006).

Of all sports, it is in golf that one finds it most difficult to win the same tournament back to back. Well, difficult but achievable.

But three wins in a row?

"Almost impossible, but probable," Guiard says.

Nick Nidds won the Masters back to back in 1989 and 1990. He lost in 1991.

Tomorrow Guiard and JE will embark on that probable mission of winning the Konica Minolta National Pro-Am, now making a record FIVE million-dinar tee a row.

"It will be an all-in for that dream," Guiard says. "May God help us."

When coach Yeng Guiao of Red Bull starts his quest for another PBA crown tomorrow against Purefoods, he will have two players in mind: Jayjay Helterbrand and James Yap. The duo sealed the deals—back to back at that—that started Ginebra San Miguel, the favored one to make it to the finals. The short version: Helterbrand was packed first draft to the front-of-the-room finish in the San Mig Coffee PBA Fiesta Conference.

Celino's triple-loss: the left-corner after a brilliant season gives him his teammate Enrico Villanueva, Yeng's true-blue preseason pick, among two shots away from the 435, while the seconds were ticking away.

But Bull was down, 73-71, when Yap took the try for a 74-73 hole advantage. Seconds later, Yeng drilled another two that made it 79-73, 47 seconds left in the game.

From there, Ginebra simply couldn't recall its vaunted never-say-die spirit and were down in defeat after booting the series, 3-1, from 1-3.

Had Ginebra pulled it out of the fire, it would have duplicated that improbable feat in 1991 when it rallied from 1-3 to beat Shell in a memorable Game 7 finale down to the last second.

Double or more in jail to America undergoing total for months, but that is another story.

* * *

The victory of Crystal Hills, a 14-year-old from Targa, South Korea, last week in the 42nd Southern Ladies Golf Tournament at Del Monte in Manolo Fortich, Bukidnon, takes the form of a Cinderella story if only because it was her first time to join the tournament.

But more than that is the manner with which she won it.

Playing two-rds, she won it by a run. After tying 280th Hampton Lorie Roberts for the first round lead with similar 4-under par scores, Chi Kimsey pulled away by firing 67-under in the second round and topping her first-over nearest rivals by 2 under on the final day for a 36-hole total of 73-under. Lore placed second, very way behind.

It was the first victory ever by a foreigner in the NCAA-organized tournament held annually since 1986. And it came with the bulk of the national women's roaring pool in attendance, although the country's No. 1, Jenny Agpay, and IRS Philippine Amateur champion Frances Bonifacio weren't around due to their school jog—stints in America and France in Australia.

Third week was the key to my victory," said Grand Slam, who arrived in Del Monte in November and went on a training regimen under Swiss Mikhael where she woke up at 5 a.m. from Monday to Sunday to practice up to 6 p.m.

Ill notes more about the kid later. Gin!

* * *

OUTBURST. Thank you also to Hachel Jan Miguel and Mike Cordejas, Amateur Golf of Del Monte Pineapple Philippines in Manolo Fortich, Bukidnon, for making our visit in Del Monte Golf Club last week a most pleasant and memorable one as usual.

* * *

Comments to manuelgdelrosario

Kimoni Badminton Tour starts Feb. 18

BADMINTON GETS ANOTHER major boost with a Bulgaling Japanese company to unveil an manufacturing equipment and other gear for the sport, organizing a nationwide series starting next week featuring the best spots of the local shuttlecock hosts.

The Kimoni Badminton Tour 2006 will start eight key cities for a series of eliminations starting Feb. 18-19 at the Smash Power Badminton Club in Pampanga. The top finishers will then battle for the Battle of Champions at the Market Market at The Fort in July.

Response to the Tour has been overwhelming, according to Billy Lim-Si, chief executive officer of Kimoni Philippines. He said the entry was go beyond the company's dream of providing a high-caliber competition for players in all skill levels.

"We believe that this Tour will become a legitimate ground for a talent search which will open doors to Filipino players who dream of making it big in the game," said Lim-Si.

The tourney features competition in men's doubles, ladies doubles and mixed doubles divisions, with more or fewer mainstays of the national training pool and county players contesting.

LIM-SI Big series

While there is an age restriction of at least 21 years old, organizers have included a junior division for the 16-20 age bracket.

The Pampanga leg gets going after the completion of the local leg over the weekend.

For out of the attendance schedule

March 4-5: Shelter Asset Marketing Group, Inc. Open (Shelter Asset Marketing Group, Inc. Open (Shelter Asset Marketing Group, Inc. Open (

Steelers steal Super Bowl 40

Pittsburgh ends 26-year drought with record 5th crown

DETROIT, MICHIGAN — PITTSBURGH HELD a 26-year title drought and completed the rarest unlikely championship run to American football history here Sunday, beating Seattle, 21-10, in Super Bowl 40.

Ben Roethlisberger and Willie Parker ran for touchdowns and Matt Hasselbeck threw three interceptions as Mike Holmgren's Seattle Seahawks failed to match the Super Bowl after mad queen of top American Conference seeds Indianapolis, Denver and Pittsburgh all were eliminated by playoff runs by crowning the National Conference's kings.

"To win after nobody thought we could - sixth seed, three playoff games on the road - way more special than if we had won last year when we were the cream of the crop," Steeler safety Chris Hope said.

Pittsburgh won their fifth Lombardi Trophy, the all-time record of five Super Bowl triumphs, giving coach Bill Cowher and fourth-year Steeler Hasselbeck their first National Football League titles to ensure their unbeatable of saying.

Cowher, nicknamed "The Bus" for his rocky fitness, pushed himself for good after 15 seasons, having won a long-sought crown in his hometown. The outsider first all-time NFL coach's ascendancy is "official like the referee's whistle."

"There's always a time when you have to call it quits," Bettis said. "It is an ending. It has been an incredible ride. I came back to win a damned ending. Mission accomplished. Now I have to find [myself].

Roethlisberger, who drove for a one-yard touchdown, became the youngest quarterback to win a Super Bowl. "Big Ben" improved to 27-4 as a starter despite the worst passer rating for a Super Bowl-winner.

Only four NFL rookies had won more games than Cowher without winning a Super Bowl. His 14 years with the Steelers is the longest tenure NFL one has put a coach with the same club.

The Steelers went to 1975, 1978, 1979 and 1980 but lost to 1996 to Dallas in Cowher's only prior Super Bowl.

Parker scored on a 75-yard run, the longest rushing play in Super Bowl history, and the Steeler defense shut down the NFL's top scoring offense and top rusher Shaun Alexander in Seattle's first Super Bowl game.

"Losing the Super Bowl is always going to be tough. It's always going to hurt...but at the same time be proud that you took Seattle to a play in last movie from Indian," Seahawks coach Mike Holmgren told his team.

AP

STEELERS' Willie Parker dives into the end zone to score a touchdown on a 75-yard run against the Seahawks, who longest run from scrimmage in Super Bowl history.

REUTERS

MVP: Dream come true for Ward

JEROME Bettis (right) holds the Vince Lombardi trophy while Hines Ward holds his son.

DETROIT — HINES WARD MADE THE BIG plays when it counted on Sunday to earn the Super Bowl XL Most Valuable Player award.

Ward hauled in five passes for 123 yards, including a 43-yard touchdown reception from wide receiver Antwaan Randle El, as the Steelers beat the Seattle Seahawks 21-10 to claim their fifth Super Bowl championship.

Ward became the fourth Steeler to win Super Bowl MVP honors after Franco Harris (1975), Lynn Swann (1976) and Terry Bradshaw (1979 and 1980).

"For me to get this honor with Bill my career," Ward said. "From when I came here and how I got to this point, it's a special feeling.

"I am at a loss for words," he added. "There have been a lot of great MVPs who have won the Super Bowl.

"And for me to have my name mentioned among some of the MVPs that played in the Super Bowl, words can't describe it.

"It's really a dream come true."

Ward's touchdown reception from Randle El, who played quarterback in college, put daylight between the two teams and sealed out the Seahawks's comeback attempt in the fourth quarter.

Ultimo, who won a Cadillac Escalade as well as the MVP trophy, was born in Seoul, South Korea and was the fourth third round draft pick in 1998 out of Georgia.

Reuters

Pacquiao: Pinoy 'Cinderella Man'

PACQUIAO: Has his parents lived with embarrassment money.

ABOUT 10 TRARLADO, A MANILA-bound ship was unknowingly carrying with it a priceless national treasure - that had yet to be unveiled then. A 12-year-old boy-every-day-person in an unmarked wrong left hand and a head filled with big dreams.

"I wanted to be a world champion," the now world human sporting box said, recalling his thoughts during the seven-hour journey.

Fifteen years after that fateful journey, Manny Pacquiao has fulfilled his dreams. And more.

Using his left hand as a talking tool, Pacquiao slowly rose to the world of boxing, cards, sending rivals crumpling down on the canvas and quickening millions to piss more.

So hard he sometime rebelled to quit school in sixth grade to try to help a fatherless family make ends meet.

"It was a bright student but didn't like school because of poverty," says Jaycee Olivarez, who owns a rudimentary school with Pacquiao. "You could tell how poor his family was by his clothes."

Today, you can tell how rich he is by the luxuries he enjoys. Aside from bus, condo-villa-homes to prize money and tens of millions more from television profit shows, Pacquiao also has his pockets lined with endorsement money.

The latest comes from the region's biggest food and beverage conglomerate in which Pacquiao shed his trademark trunks for one of the country's wealthiest suitors.

From a lowly "panadero" (baker's hand) to a multimillionaire at 27, Pacquiao has truly been an inspiration to millions.

Jaime Zobel de Ayala, chairman of the Ayala Corporation, owns Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co., Philippine Airlines, Globe Telecom, Inc. and Bank of the Philippine Islands.

Pacquiao, 27, is the first athlete to endorse Ayala's Philippine "Underdog" line.

Born in a shifting country on Dec. 17, 1978, Manny Dapidran Pacquiao grew up in a one-room shanty in a coastal village in General Santos City in western Mindanao.

His parents separated when he was young, and his mother, Dionisia, had to support six children with her paltry income from a series of odd jobs. Pacquiao helped out by selling bread and taho as a laundry.

Pacquiao was hard-tooth grade and often dropped out because his family was too poor to keep him in school. His mother's connections to his priest, but he had other plans.

Pacquiao fled Gentian at age 12 to pursue his dreams in the streets spending many nights sleeping on the sidewalks of Manila.

Inspiring himself initially as a non-amateur amateur and by boarding at pool halls and basketball courts, he never lost sight of his goal. And he went quickly in the amateur and pro boxing circuit.

While his stature was only three-three world champion (118 pounds) of Mexico, Pacquiao is now ranked the top contender and boxes eighth-seeded Marco Antonio Barrera, the man he beat by an 11th round TKO on 2003, again for the WBC super featherweight title.

While his earnings, Pacquiao can well afford to retire from boxing.

Pacquiao continues to box from fear of losing of life outside the boxing ring but, for now, he prefers to his focus on his 8 careers in order and secure his family's future. He has purchased a 95-million home in General Santos, a condominium unit in Davao, another house in Baguio and a guesthouse in Greenhills.

While he allows himself some luxuries (he has a Honda HVo Ford Expedition, a Toyota Tamaraw and, his latest acquisition, a Porsche Cayenne worth millions), Pacquiao also makes sure his newfound wealth trickles down to as many people as he can of his station will allow.

He has both building for himself, his childhood thousands of gift packets to those who visited his home.

He even moved his mornings are managed by his wife, Jinkee, and the lady of the house keeps a large part of the money in a bank.

The triumph recently doubled to open a retail store named after Pacquiao's boxing comrades "The Pacman," but does initial women into "mom-and-pop" entrepreneurship is getting a big helping hand from another proud Philippine fashion, Jhan Macalinao Gonzalez.

Pacquiao has signed a deal that will see him soon be the mandate for Jhan Miguel. He has agreed to do a series of commercials for the company, appearing as a talent in ads promoting Jhan Miguel shoes and bags, aside his Everlast.

"Manny's image fits very well with our values in Jhan Miguel, particularly the passion to be success," Jhan Miguel president and chief operating officer Rosanna C. Ang said. "We are proud to have Manny as our partner in bringing to the market products that are well-loved by consumers."

Beyond the endorsement deal, Pacquiao is also no stranger his initial foray into big business, as he enters into a product distribution deal with Jhan Miguel.

Indeed, the slugger has come a long way as a lily-jammy that began as a street-wise

Rockets' blast downs Knicks

NEW YORK — TRACY MCGRADY SCORED 22 points and David Wesley added 19, including several key free throws late, to lead the Houston Rockets to a 93-89 win over the struggling New York Knicks on Sunday.

Jay Mitig, in his fourth game back since missing 21 after ear surgery, looked to have shaken off any lingering effects of the injury and had 15 points. Shannon's reward is 22-0 when he and 100 only play.

With both in state mobility, Houston has seen three straight for the first time since it captured that in a row from Dec. 6-13.

The Knicks had a chance to tie with 6.5 seconds left, but a 3-pointer by John Bunn was partially blocked by Rockets' Scott Stoddard short.

Yao scored 16 points and received a warm reception from the crowd in his debut with the Knicks after being traded from Toronto on February 1. Jamal Crawford scored 24 points for New York. Curry had 13 for the Knicks, who have lost five straight and 11 of the last 12.

In Toronto, Elton Brand scored 28 points, Sam Cassell added 27, and the Los Angeles Clippers moved 11 games over .500 for the first time in team history with a 113-103 overtime victory over the Toronto Raptors.

Cassell over the game into overtime with a 3-pointer and scored the points in the extra period.

In Sacramento, California, Mike Bibby scored 33 points, Kevin Martin added 20 and Sacramento his more than enough field goals in the fourth quarter to beat Utah, 96-91.

AP

KEARS ASPECTS will as the 11 a.m. — Minnesota Phoenix Suns at 7:30 p.m. It will be replayed at 11 a.m.

Tiger thrives in the desert

DUBAI, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES — TIGER Woods has the lead in overtime this season.

Two shots behind only two holes to play, Woods drove the green on the 259-yard, 17th hole to set up a birdie. Birdie finish that got him into a playoff, where he defeated Stephen Ames on the first extra hole Sunday to win the Dubai Desert Classic.

Two tournaments, two conditions, two playoff victories.

"I couldn't ask for anything more than that," said Woods, who hasn't started a season with two victories since his record-setting year in 2000. "Two playoffs, too. Very stressful, but I was somehow able to come out on top. I was very fortunate today."

It was similar to last week in San Diego, where Woods birdied the final hole to get into a playoff in the Buick Invitational and won with part when his opponent made mistakes.

He also birdied the last hole with a 6-foot putt to win the 2005 Bob Hope Classic. In golf, he one does into the sandy grove of palms, and his approach came up about a yard short into the seven. He made a deep and pitched 20 feet beyond the hole, missing his par putt.

Woods shared with a 3-under 69, finishing with a birdie from behind the 18th green in regulation to take the 4 to 19 under 269 in Dubai. Ames of Australia birdied four of the holes before the stretch to take the lead, but he drove into a plugged lie in the sandy palm grove and took bogey on the 18th.

He shot 3-under 67, but the ending was all too familiar. It was the third time he has lost in a playoff to Woods, and the second time for the 35-year-old South African has finished second to Woods.

AP

Ex-boxers' trust fund going, going, gone?

I AGREE WITH THE OBSERVATION OF veteran television journalist Johns Rubon of ABS-CBN TV Patrol and MBP host Mike Enriquez of GMA TV Saksi that boxers are in dire need of financial help, citing in particular Nonito Donaire, the reigning world junior lightweight champion, who is now impoverished and always gets into trouble.

In his column in the tabloid Bulgar, Rubon voiced an urgent appeal from the cash-strapped Games and Amusements Board for more monetary contributions to the disabled boxers' trust fund, which is now running low.

The disabled boxers' fund is down to only P600,000, "Quite a pittance for boxers at the GAB to enjoy. "There are more than 100 ex-boxers who are asking for financial help and we simply could not accommodate all of them, that's why the GAB is appealing to influential politicians, including sports patrons Pilot Gordonian Miller Juico, for financial assistance to boost the boxers' trust fund."

I have no problem with that appeal for contributions because that is one way of increasing the badly depleted boxers' trust fund and helping our long suffering pugilistic fighters. It has also been suggested that another way of raising more money for the

CLEAN LIVING

Manuel R. Hizon

trust fund is by revising the PSA Fiesta Filipinas. But there is been already sort of lost any love for pro boxing. I am against this suggestion to those who are in closing positions to help the the Philippine Sportswriters Association headed by Jimmy Gaston of Bilang, GMB chuck Tito Delmo, longtime manager promoter Gus Rond Dino of the Philippine Boxing Association, Inc. (PBAI) and Commissioner Harold Ben Nikko Rubid, a done buddy of Manny Pacquiao.

An annual boxing event very much popular in the 1960s, the Fiesta Pilipinas is a no-fun charity card for the benefit of deserving and disabled Filipino boxers. The annual event "Finals" could be used to regularly appear in the Fiestaeta and donated a portion of his purse to the boxers' fund.

Because for several years, the Fiestaeta was ruined by the PSA on Nov. 5, 1966, with the backing of Speaker Jose de Venecia, then Senate Deputy Speaker and now brothers Senate Gloe Read Enrile, former GAB chair Commissioner Cepeda, Jimmy Bady Subid, then Philippine Sports Commission chair Philip Ella Juico, veteran radio-donnes Sen Soriano, the late Fernando Poe, Jr. of the Philippine Boxing Association, lawyer-CPA Antonio Lucero and the ex-concessions of Sen Jr Gonzo Alano had Gloe, who made other Fiestaeta proceeds for them.

A huge financial success, the Fiestaeta raised more than P800,000 for the Disabled Filipino Fund Fund, but more importantly by reinstating itself to an audit, the PSA set a good example for all fund-raisers. The AGN audit released a favorable response from all sectors, including the PSA's generous sponsors, among them San Miguel Corp., Pepsi-Cola Inc. former Manila Mayor and now Sen. Alfredo Lim, Philippine Airlines, Dole Phi Family Building Mabuhi Motel Residential and Hotel Development.

Rico Rodoria of Cagayan de Oro pounded out a sensational 15th round TKO of highly favored American champion Cedric Mingo to retain the World Boxing Federation featherweight crown in the top boxer of the Fiestaeta. Darlene Ann Hernandez Rubid is famous joined in capacity crowd who watched the fights at the Nixon Aquino Stadium.

Among the newly ex-boxers who received financial assistance were former World Boxing Council junior lightweight champ Nonito Donaire. Donaire would add contender Penny Boy Garcia, the late WBC junior welterweight title-holder Pedro Adigue, Ferd Base, Benjamin Cardona, Boy Bon, Dominic Ulanu, Al Amacion, Leonardo Cocoplaza a.k.a. Leo Zulueta, Tito Abella, Jose Gaudier, The Zuelo, Wilson Galero, Mario Arispe and Monico Caligay.

In their independent financial report, SGV accountants and in part: "We have audited the statements of cash receipts and disbursements of the 1956 Fiesta Filipinas. We conducted our audit in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free of material misstatement.

"In our opinion, the statements referred to present fairly, in all material respects, the statement of cash receipts and disbursements of the 1956 Fiesta Filipinas, in conformity with the accounting standard by the Fund."

POSTBOT BY BILL AMEND

A. LIPPA BY JESS ABRERA

MARVIN BY TOM ARMSTRONG

PUGAD BABOY BY PAT JUNIOR

BABY BLUES BY JERRY SCOTT

HUTTS BY PATRICK MCDONNELL

ATOMIC MIND N BOBBY BY LYRA GARCELLANO

DIVINE COMEDY BY STEVEN PANALIGAN

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCES DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You're intuitive. You're also schmoozing pro. You want to make the world a better place. Yours? Anyone's—it matters for a better society. Your values (family and friends. You take your responsibilities seriously. Determination, you're quick-witted and down-to-earth. The year ahead might be one of the best fortunate years of your life!

Birthdate of: Chris Rock, comic; actor Cicely Tyson, singer; Juliana Saarinen, actor.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): This is a busy day for you. You'll talk to siblings, relatives and neighbors. It's also a good day for negotiations and contracts. What's the buzz?

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): It's on top of your financial scene today. Your money matters are in order. Your bank accounts keep track of your cash flow. Now is the time to pay some bills and reduce your debts.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): You're taking a lot of new information in today. You're in a learning mode. Your curiosity is at its peak. Be open and flexible. Your mind is working overtime.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): You could make peace and quiet waters. You need to be patient. Work alone if you can, or at least stay busy behind the scenes for a little rest and relaxation.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Communication with others, especially a female friend, will be significant today. You'll enjoy talking with others. Avoid going on extravagant shopping sprees.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): The Moon is on the cusp of your chart today. You need to be careful. You will notice you, so watch how words. Conversations with bosses, VIPs and parents are important.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): It's important to do something different today. Break it up a little. Go someplace you've never been to before. You may encounter a real you want to learn something new!

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): You feel very intense about something today. Your passion, your emotions are high. You'll probably have a few heated discussions. Be careful about what you say.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Today the Moon is opposite your sign. This usually means you're restless. You're impatient, so you are sure what to say to someone.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): This is a good day to get better organized at home and work. Make a list of things to do. You want your living to be tidy, neat and organized. Finding an item will be easier.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): You can be a bit blind. Remember that not everyone sees things the way you do. Enjoy the company of others. Positive social spirits, however, and show kindness are favored.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): This is a good day to spend around at home. Get in contact with all the people you love. This is the time to talk about the last step.

DAILY CROSSWORD

BEH BY DANIEL SHELTON

KIKO MACHINE BY MANIX ABRERA

LOKTENOTS BY ELIZABETH CHONGLO

TULBOK BY RAFLAND "BITUIN" MAMBUNG

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 2006
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
B1
BUSINESS

RP investors send big money offshore

BSP says $10.4B in local funds invested overseas

By Dwinn L. Leras

HAVING EARNED SUBSTANTIAL FINANCIAL WEALTH FROM A long career in banking, Mr. Cruz now invests his money with the aim of protecting its value and getting the right return.

This means parking his money in a slew of investment vehicles like stocks, bonds, mutual funds and money-market placements.

"I even have (EDR)," Cruz said. "It's part of my diversification strategy."

EDR—bankers' jargon for "Republic of the Philippines"—refer to dollar-denominated bonds sold by the Philippine government abroad when borrowing money from foreign banks. Mr. Cruz said these EDRs represent one of the most important parts of his investment portfolio.

But Mr. Cruz is no ordinary investor. He is Oscar Cruz, the treasurer of the Republic of the Philippines, the man tasked by the President to manage and oversee the government's efforts to manage its finances mainly by selling bonds both here and abroad.

Like most high-net-worth...and well-to-

SPECIAL REPORT

forward—investors in this country. Cruz sees the need to "diversify" his holdings not only by buying different kinds of investments, but by actually sending their money to safer shores abroad.

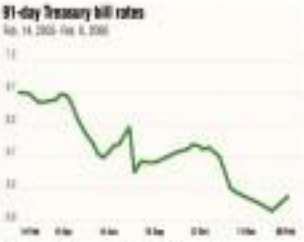
Exported capital

According to the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP), some $10.4 billion worth of the country's resources—more than P540 billion at current exchange rates—are lodged in foreign banks domiciled in foreign countries.

The amount represents roughly a tenth of the value of the local economy in 2005 of about P5 trillion.

"A significant portion of this is invested in EDRs," BSP managing director Celia Gonzales

SEE BSP ON B2



91-day T-bill rate inches up to 5.097%

By Michelle V. Rivera

THE BELIEVERS IN 91-DAY TREASury bill rate inched up by 23.4 basis points to 5.097 percent yesterday, with Treasury officials finally giving in to market pressure after rejecting all bids for the T-bill in the past two auctions.

The yield of the three-month government security could have gone even higher as 5.209 percent had all bids were accepted at yesterday's auction.

The Treasury accepted only P625 million worth of bids compared with the government's programmed borrowing through the 91-day bills of P1 billion.

"People are willing to buy and sell 91 day at that level. She accepted a rate where the secondary market was trading," National Treasurer Omar Cruz said in a briefing after the auction.

TO PAGE B2

Currencies

PESO-DOLLAR RATE

$1 = ₱55.462 as of 5 p.m., Feb. 6, 2006

¥1 = ₱0.4688 as of 5 p.m., Feb. 6, 2006

GOLD: $572.40-573.90 per ounce Hong Kong, Feb. 6, 2006

Stock Market

Shares close slightly lower

MARKET PRICES CLOSED LOWER YESTERDAY as continued profit-taking in the region after recent gains, dealers said.

Wall Street's decline Friday and concerns over the prospect of a more prolonged rise in US interest rates also weighed on sentiment, they said.

The composite index fell 5.45 points to 2,130.11 after trading between 2,126.81 and 2,141.39. Volume was 960.5 million shares.

SEE MARKET B2

WHAT'S INSIDE

Treasury seen budget gap below P125B B2

World Bank loan eyed for LRT 1 extension B3

Peso hits over 3-yr high B3

Fixed income exchange honors top dealers

By Doris C. Dumlao

SECURITY BANK, BANK OF THE Philippine Islands, China Bank, RCBC and Metrobank were the five most active trading banks in the country's government fixed income exchange for 2005.

Philippine Dealing and Exchange Corp. (PDEX), which started the annual recognition of PS participants, received the five banks as forming separated the highest peso value of trades in the inter-dealer negotiated dealing platform of its fixed income exchange last year.

PDEx president Conor Ozorio said this confirmed "the ability of participants to focus the growing demands of a changing market, providing at the same time to keep improvements going in developing the local capital market."

Although the annual recognition was more only based on the value of trades, the exchange plans to consider other criteria for its "PDEx Annual Achievement Awards" based on the participants' contribution to the advancement of the capital market reform agenda.

PDEx Group president and CEO Vicente Castillo said the awards serve "a recognition of their efforts in providing liquidity through their trading and market-making activities."

He hailed the five banks for their "commitment to increasing the activity of secondary peso benchmarks through dealt trades."

Treasury sees budget gap below ₱125B

By Michelle V. Ramos

NATIONAL TREASURER OMAR CHOU said the government could really outperform the official target of cutting the budget deficit to P125 billion this year given the positive macroeconomic fundamentals that have been underscored by its fiscal performance in 2005.

Chou said that with the larger tax base, the government could generate revenues much higher than last year's. The larger tax base is partly a result of the implementation of the VAT Reform Law, which lifted the value-added tax exemption of oil, electricity and other products and services.

Total government revenues last year reached P595.7 billion, without the full impact of the VAT law that took effect only last November. The law did not only expand the coverage of the VAT since then, but also increased the tax rate from 10 to 12 percent last Feb. 1.

The government's target of a P125 billion deficit this year translates to a deficit-to-GDP (gross domestic product) ratio of 2.1 percent. Gross said this ratio could be easily surpassed given the huge revenue potential of the government's revenue-raising measures.

Last month, the BSP, too, government was targeting a deficit-to-GDP ratio of 3.4 percent, but it actually registered a much better figure of only 2.7 percent.

Given that the actual deficit-to-GDP ratio had been declining by about one percentage point every year in the past few years, it was likely that the government could achieve a ratio better than the 2.1 percent target for this year.

The means that the P125-billion target, which corresponds to the 2.1 percent deficit-to-GDP ratio, could be surpassed, he said.

In 2004, the deficit-to-GDP ratio stood at 4.7% percent. It went down to 3.95 percent in 2004 and to 2.7 percent in 2005.

Shares close slightly lower

From page B1

shares worth P681.27 million.

The broader all-shares index fell 1.47 points to 1,822.27.

Losers led gainers 40 to 27, with 39 stocks unchanged.

METROBANK

STATEMENT OF CONDITION

CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF CONDITION

ASSETS

LIABILITIES

CAPITAL ACCOUNTS

CONTINGENT ACCOUNTS

RP investors send . . .

From page B1

said in an interview. Funds used to buy RDPs eventually find their way back to local money to fund the government's elusive cash shortfall, but only after other foreign investments bankers in New York and London take their fat commissions.

According to the central bank, Filipinos had a total of $13.7 billion invested in the form of financial assets as of last month. Of this amount, about $10.4 billion is actually invested in dollar-denominated securities.

Gonzalez reasons that two-thirds of this amount was used by Filipinos to buy dollar-denominated by their own governments, while another $1 billion was allocated to buy dollar bonds issued by land blue chip firms like companies like the Ayala conglomerate or Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co.

The central bank official, who is in charge with monitoring dollar flows into and out of the country, said this figure is "very small" from investment offshore by Filipinos through their banks' trust departments and insurance firms.

"This doesn't include the investments of high net worth individuals," he said. "Based on BSP data, we can invest their money abroad without moving them through traditional banking channels.

By all means, the treasury chief knows the only economic manager who invests his money abroad. Bowen resources managers like former BSP Governor Rafael B. Buenaventura and former Finance Secretary Jose Isidro N. Camacho. At one point, the rich-and-famous Lucio Tan is also said to all admitted to having "three half" of their assets denominated in dollars and investments in dollar-denominated assets.

It is no longer strange that these people — considered the country's economic — find it necessary to invest their money elsewhere. "It is only but prudent," analysts cannot control bankruptcy risk, impressing anonymity. "You'll sleep better at night."

However, Chu reconsidered way of investing and funding the government's cash needs has its cons.

Because of this inefficiency — having to support offshore before bringing it back onshore — the government has to pay expensive investment bankers and go on costly foreign roadshows, and put more for "exchange" capital, which in turn increases already more less than other they should.

Unpopular solution

In recent years, efforts have been made to reform the local capital markets by introducing a bond exchange, similar in concept to the stock market, where public and private debt can be traded in a more transparent manner.

Efforts were headed Vicente Castillo, who now chairs PDS Holdings Corp., the parent of the bond exchange, has been shooting him self bonds, trying to convince a skeptical banking community about the merits of the bourse.

"If you have domestic debt issued in foreign currency and funded by local citizens, that portion is none of inefficient — it's of the system," Castillo said, explaining that a bond exchange would help reduce — although not completely eliminate — the need for borrowers like the government to go abroad for money.

The proposed bond exchange, however, has encountered stiff opposition from domestic bankers and regulators reluctant to surrender control of the bond market's future decisions in his proposed bourse.

With these reforms, interest rate spreads will go down," Castillo said. "Investors will earn more and borrowers will pay less."

What Castillo doesn't say is that the plan will cut or cut banks' fees the lucrative loop by bringing the borrowers closer to their clients — a system bankers are already opposing.

Treasury's Chu, however, is undeterred by the opposition.

"It doesn't matter to me what system we use," he said, inferring his stand on the proposed capital market reforms. "What I'm interested in is getting the best price for the dollar."

So far, Chu has done an excellent job of cutting the country's cost of foreign borrowing. Since he assumed office last year, Chu said that the country's borrowing costs have declined by more than a percentage points on the average — a total savings of close to P500 million annually — though he admits that this was prompted by a combination fiscal reforms and improved investor hungering with foreign bond underwriters.

"In the end, you can have all the capital market reforms, but it is still the fundamental fiscal picture that will determine your cost of borrowing," Cruz said, referring to the "junk" rating of Philippine bonds and securities.

Shedding a ratings upgrade and a more efficient capital market, however, Cruz said many other investors are still confident enough to "diversify" their investments by sending their money abroad.

Indeed, the Philippines may be starved for foreign portfolio and direct investments, but for now, its residents would continue to send their money abroad.

91-day T-bill rate . . .

From page B1

He explained that it was reasonable to accept a higher rate so long as it was in line with the levels in the secondary market.

Analysts said the rate for the benchmark 91-day bills could have already increased to reach the 6.063 percent but Jan. 26, and could not go down any further. The last rate recorded in January was the lowest since August 2002.

The 182-day bills fetched a rate of 6.221 percent, or 9.77basis points lower than the previous week's. Still for the 182-day bills reached P9.04 billion compared with the programmed debt offering of only P1 billion. Due to the big demand for the six-month paper, the treasury decided to accept P1.4 billion worth of bids.

The rate for the 364-day bills settled at 7.219 percent, 2 basis points higher than the rate recorded during last week's auction.

National gov't debt declined to ₱3.91T in November

By Michelle V. Ramos

THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT'S debt dropped for the second consecutive month in November last year as the declining budget deficit eased the need for borrowings.

Statistics showed that the government's debt went down to ₱3.91 trillion as of end-November last year from ₱3.95 trillion in October of the same year. The October figure was 2 percent lower than the ₱4.02 trillion in September.

The decline in the debt figure did not mean the government had stopped borrowing. This indicated that the government paid more maturing obligations than the amount borrowed in November.

The Department of Finance said that of the ₱3.91 trillion worth of debt, 43 percent was owed to foreign creditors while 57 percent came from domestic lenders.

Foreign debt as of November, which stood at ₱1.75 trillion, was 3.2 percent more than the end-October figure. The DOF said that in the case of foreign obligations, the government registered higher net payments than net borrowings in November.

The decrease in foreign liabilities was also partly attributed to the appreciation of the peso and other currencies against the US dollar, which made foreign debts cheaper to pay across. The DOF said the weakening of the dollar helped reduce foreign debt by ₱63 billion.

Domestic debt, however, hit ₱2.16 trillion or 0.7 percent high- er than the amount recorded in October. This was due to the increase in the issuance of government securities in the domestic market.

The DOF also reported that the national government's contingent debt, composed of liabilities of state-owned companies that carried sovereign guarantees, stood at ₱402 billion as of November. The figure was lower than the ₱402.6 billion recorded in October.

The DOF said the decline in contingent debt was also due to the appreciation of the peso, which reduced the peso value of the foreign liabilities of state-owned companies.

World Bank loan eyed for LRT 1 extension

No gov't counterpart funding needed

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE WORLD BANK IS WILLING TO FINANCE much as half of the estimated $800 million financing requirement of the Light Rail Transit Line 1 extension to Cavite, LRT Authority administrator Mel Robles said.

Robles said the multilateral creditor had expressed willingness to provide low-cost funds for the civil works component of the project, which was estimated to account for half of the project cost.

"The World Bank is willing to finance portion of the project even without counterpart funding from the government," said Robles.

He said the cost of the project was expected to be lower than the unsolicited offer of $867 million since it would be narrower-off. The plan is to hold the bidding within the first semester.

The first phase of the LRTA Line 1 extension, nicknamed the railway up to Baclaran in Cavite, is many latest be extended further to Imus and to Dasmariñas, also in Cavite.

LRT Line 1 carries an average of 300,000 passengers a day. With the extension, this is expected to increase to 400,000.

The LRTA occupied last year an agreement with Canadian firm SNC-Lavalin, which had offered to undertake the 12-kilometer extension of LRT Line 1 to Baclaran Cavite from Baclaran for $867 million.

Robles said the LRTA must fulfill two things before it can bid out the mass transport extension to Cavite—to pay SNC-Lavalin the balance of $1-million for the feasibility study and development plans it made for the project and to get the transportation department's endorsement that the project's inclusion in the medium-term priority investment plan.

In inclusion to the medium-term plan will guarantee a budget come from the national government, which will ensure that creditors will get paid.

The budget department has yet to release the $5 million (roughly ₱260 million) requested by the LRTA for the full payment of the feasibility study and development plan.

The Canadian firm said it had spent $200 million for the feasibility study and development plans. This sum, however, reduced to $130 million, of which, $5 million was already paid.

International Finance Corp., the World Bank's investment arm and a consultant for the project, believed the unsolicited offer of SNC-Lavalin was too high, according to the LRTA.

The Canadian firm also sought a guarantee cover from the government, which made its offer even more disadvantageous to the government, Robles said.

The government received the unsolicited offer from SNC-Lavalin more than five years ago but the project could not proceed because of doubts over the economic viability of the project.

PSBank raising capital to ₱6B

By Doris C. Dumlao

PHILIPPINE SAVINGS BANK, THE THIRD largest of Metropolitan Bank and Trust Co., plans to jack up its capital base by the end of the year to ₱6 billion, from the current level of ₱4.8 billion, to fund further expansion.

The country's second largest thrift bank recently raised its capital via a ₱1-billion rights offering. It plans to generate another ₱750 million in core capital through a stocks rights offering this semester.

PSBank tapped affiliate First Metro Investment Corp. to underwrite its planned rights offering.

In a recent press briefing, PSBank president Conrad Garcia said new challenges confronting the banking industry—the new accounting rules and the introduction of a new system in line with the Basle Capital adequacy rule—would put a hefty pressure on to maintain its ability to improve risk management, establish a strong core business and build organizational competencies.

The said PSBank had long prepared for this challenging environment by developing new structures and leveling up in technology.

"We're not worried about Basle 2 because the bank is profitable. We're in good position to absorb these rules. The additional capital would be a buffer that will put us in a place where we could broaden the opportunities," he said.

Pre-need firms' trust funds up

PRE-NEED COMPANIES POSTED A 9.2 percent increase in their trust fund assets to ₱76.2 billion as of September last year, up by ₱6.2 billion from ₱69.8 billion in end-2004, the Philippine Federation of Pre-Need Plan Companies Inc. (PFPPCI) said in a statement.

Preferential president Jose Albert Alba, also an officer of the federation, said earnings from investment instruments soared by the growth in the yields of stock market placements and long-term bond investments. He said stock prices grew by about 35 percent last year while yields of long-term bonds, by around 20 percent.

Trust fund income of pre-need firms grew to ₱5.086 billion as of end-September from ₱3.31 billion in December 2004.

PFPPCI said the industry figures came from the Securities and Exchange Commission and covered 47 pre-need firms. — Elizabeth C. Jocelson

Goings on

Asian Spirit expanding

ASIAN SPIRIT AIRLINES PRESIDENT CARMELO LADRAS announced that the airline will start flying to Tuguegarao on March 1.

The new morning flight out of Manila City is at 6:40 a.m. while the last flight is at 5:30 p.m.

Asian Spirit will use its newly acquired 100-seater Fokker 50 aircraft to fly to the new destination.

The airline also plans to fly to Palau and Manado, Indonesia next March.

iBank's iCheckpoints

PHILIPPINE EXCHANGE BANK (PEBC) recently introduced its checking account that earned points that could be used to redeem premium items.

iCheckpoints account holders, with at least ₱25,000 in average daily balance, will earn points that can be exchanged for gift certificates from selected shops and restaurants, tips of the line audio-video equipment and plane tickets.

23rd SM mall

SM PRIME HOLDINGS INC. is scheduled to open its 23rd mall, the 78,000 square meter SM City Sta. Rosa, in Sta. Rosa, Laguna on Feb. 17. This is in line with efforts to expand SMPH's activities into the provinces.

The two-level mall is a 10-minute drive from the SM complex and SM City Sta. Rosa offers one-stop shopping convenience as it includes a variety of retail establishments, along with the SM Department store and SM Supermarket.

BUSINESS

Peso hits over 3-yr high

Confidence boosts currency

By Dora C. Dumlao

THE PESO CONTINUED ITS RALLY AGAINST the US dollar yesterday and closed at $1.885, its strongest finish since August 2003.

Currency dealers said the currency strengthened on robust market sentiment and upbeat sentiment on the government's fiscal reforms.

The peso gained over 2.3 percent over the last two weeks.

Marcelo Ang, chief foreign exchange dealer at Equitable PCI Bank, predicted that the peso would continue its strong run and break into the $1.88 level as the greenback loses this year, if the government's cash budget position remained on track.

The currency's rally this year has been fueled largely by improvements in trading in the foreign market.

Expectations that this month's increase in the rates tax will fetch the government higher revenues, and raise the chances for an upgrade in the country's rating, have also buoyed the currency.

The peso opened yesterday at $1.90, hit a high of $1.71 in morning trade and further gained ground in the afternoon, even as the US dollar firmed up against major global currencies like the Japanese yen, euro, British pound and Swiss franc.

The local currency gained 30.5 centavos from Friday's finish of $1.91 to the greenback.

Some $620.3 million changed hands at the Philippine Dealing System.

Food exports reach $1.07B

By Ronnel W. Domingo

FOOD EXPORTS REACHED ABOUT $1.07 billion from January to November 2005, a slight 1.9 percent rise from about $1 billion recorded in the same period in 2004, said the Department of Trade and Industry.

To sustain the growth, Trade Undersecretary Thomas G. Aquino said local food exporters needed to comply with new labeling requirements, which provide that products labels must indicate if raw fat and allergen contents before these would be sold in the United States market.

Starting Jan. 1, the US Food and Drug Administration implemented the Food Allergen Labeling Consumer Protection Act as part of efforts to encourage healthy eating habits.

The law requires the identification in plain English, rather than by technical names, of the presence of any of the eight major food allergens in food labels.

However, Aquino said exporters could still meet their obligations to the US, provided they use stickers that indicate the necessary details to supplement the old food labels.

The eight major food allergens that should be identified in the labels are milk, egg; fish like bass, flounder, and cod; crustaceans like crabs, lobsters, and shrimps; tree nuts like almonds, pecans, and walnuts; wheat; peanuts; and soybeans.

"We do not want any food exporters to be caught off guard, having no idea why their shipments are being embargoed," Aquino said.

Pilmico to invest ₱150M more

By Christine A. Gaffican

PILMICO FOODS CORP., A SUBSIDIARY OF the Absolut Equity Ventures Inc., plans to invest at least ₱150 million this year in the expansion of its new livestock production line.

The increase is expected to be a slight amount in 2006 this year, which will require the expansion of Pilmico's swine breeding operations in barangays Amaguesan and Cut-cut in Capas, Tarlac. Fil-Am Foods president Antonio Moreno said in an interview with the business.

"We spent about ₱300 million over the last three years and will probably spend another ₱150 million this year for some expansion and facility upgrading," Moreno said.

Moreno said the additional investment should make its facilities more cost efficient, given the high cost of feeds.

The Absolut Group, through Pilmico Foods Corp., now owns 100 percent of Fil-Am Foods, after acquiring the shares of American partners, PIF Stockton Co. Inc. and Tyson Foods Inc. in 2003.

Fil-Am Foods' feeds manufacturing plant in Capas, Tarlac and in Digos City are fully automated and thus, could produce better quality feeds at low operating costs, Moreno explained.

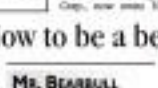
After only six years in the Philippine feeds market, SMC Starmix—the brand name created by Fil-Am Foods products—has been recognized by both commercial and backyard animal raisers in the country.

The company is more aggressive in cornering a niche in the hog sector.

The company competes with San Miguel Foods Corp.'s (SMFC) Purefoods and Cargill Philippines Inc.'s Pacmeo Feeds.

According to the 2004 annual report of the ABS Group, Pilmico posted a 1.08 percent increase to income from its ₱2.92 billion net to ₱2.95 million in profits.

How to be a better investor II



IF YOU FOLLOWED THE ADVICE contained in the first two articles, you should have improved your performance without VIAGRA. Here are few more tips to help you on your way.

Long-term investment myth

This applies not only to the stock market but also to virtually everything that moves in cycles.

Using a chart freebie, in 1980, I bought gold at $435 an ounce and sold it 17 days later at $666. If you had bought gold then, you would have watched it fall 78 percent over a period of 20 years before it recovered. Even now, 25 years later, it is still down $200, so timing is critical.

Take a look at the Phisix.

Back on Jan. 9, 1997, it was 3,408, and it is still 1,500 points lower nine years later. During that period, the Phisix has been damaged four times, and the two five-point-plus stocks were destroyed and replaced by five inferior and better quality companies.

Yes, it is still down about 37 percent. And this does not take into account 9 years of inflation.

If you calculate it in dollar terms, the Phisix is not really terrifying. MSCI, a leading index stock, stood at P157 or $6 a share, at the rate of exchange then prevailing. The current price of P1025.45 (today's dollar rate is about 54 centavos).

Take a look at the Nikkei.

Back in 1990, the Index reached 39,300. But in long-ups, it was down to 8,000. Now that Japan appears to be recovering from a long recession, the Nikkei is 14,700. But it is still down 57 percent from 15 years ago.

Or look at the many prints that the US stocks reached in the year 2,000. They were selling on price/earnings ratios of 250 or more. Some of those stocks became companies while many others fell up to 95 percent as the bubble burst.

So, long-term investing is not the answer. As the great economist Keynes said, "In the long-term, we are all dead." Timing is everything, and that is why you MUST learn technical analysis.

Do not overtrade

This does not apply as much as it did nine years ago when turnover was low means higher than it is now to those days, the virtual forever hovers in Brussels was selling 6% to incredible shows.

The same people are now selling memorial plots to their former rich and depressed clients. After the 87% debacle, public confidence in the stock market waned. One poor lady emailed me that she had paid P1.64 on the advice of her stockbroker and the stock had fallen to 70 centavos.

She asked if she would ever see her money back and I replied somewhat unkindly, "Only if you believe in reincarnation." The market is now showing signs of life and I am pleased to see that the PSE is now organizing seminars to educate the small investor.

Trading rules are very high. Two commissions plus VAT, sales tax, and the spread adds up to around 3.5 percent. To make it easier, common becomes increasingly rich so if you have those odds stacked against you, you will not make money trading everything unless you are a genius.

I am not, as I have trained myself to be patient and stay out of the market for days, weeks, even months. Patience is a virtue, which you must cultivate. When the trend is down, do what the hedgehog does and go into hibernation.

Do not trade on tips

In England, we have a saying "Where there's a tip, there is rip." In American, that is known but it doesn't sound right so I won't sound upon you. Anyway this is pretty well covered by the previous rule.

Buy low priced shares

This does not mean that you should rush to buy low-priced third liners, which do not have any assets and have never made a profit. But occasionally, you might hit the jackpot and we have seen the price of PHB triple in less than two weeks.

This could just possibly happen to a heavyweight such as SM, Lands & Homes or the PI or PLDT range as they are more valuable but remember that volatility is a double-edged sword.

Learn technical analysis

Sadly, there are no courses in this country to teach it and I am much too old and feeble to consider it. There is a society of Technical Analysts, but it has been dormant for years. Still, there are various things you can do.

You can buy books on the subject in good bookstores, but they are imported and cost around P1,000.

The best author is John Murphy because he writes as simply as that beginners can understand it. Martin Pring writes in a very complex manner suitable only for those with advanced knowledge of the subject.

You can subscribe to PHOTINESOFT (formerly TECHNOTOOL) for P800 a month and you will get on-line quotes in the morning, charts with 4 indicators and access to lots of fundamental data. You can obtain some of this free from "FIRST FINANCE.com." You can also get an introduction to technical analysis plus weekly charts from tangiers.com, and they also sell second hand books.

I have a technical analysis newsletter, but it is at the top end of the market. It is not free, it is designed for traders with at least P500,000 and they count under round terms such as price/earnings ratios and stock dividends. Subscriptions are kept down to a reasonable rate and the figure reduces to remains personal.

Occasionally, clues become available.

Then there is the Internet, which has a vast amount of information, but you need to search awesomely. Typing in technical analysis will probably result in millions of sites so be specific. I remember inserting Point and Figure into the search engine, instead of Point and Figure charts, the computer provided me with numerous articles on charts and an equal number on women with beautiful pointed figures.

If you have a computer, buy METASTOCK. The latest version is $295, but you can pickup older versions for less and it is worth it. It is purely for technical analysis and gives about 100 indicators, which you can adjust for the Philippine markets. This means changing the default because our market is much smaller and exhibits different characteristics. The problem is getting the data but it is provided at 12:30 p.m. by the PSE. You need the help of your broker.

If you do not have a computer, you can make your own Point and Figure charts but first, you must purchase the data from a public library or the research department of the PSE. This is very tedious but you only have to do it once.

The total cost of a month book and a pencil is P50. Once you have mastered the data, you can create the Phisix in 30 minutes a day and it is very easy to analyze. I have been using this system since 1970 in the London stock market and strongly recommend it to students.

I hope that this series of three articles will prove useful to readers. mrbearbull@hotmail.com

Take advantage of PSBank's HIGH $ RATES

1 month	3.0000%	3.1250%	3.2500%	3.3750%
2 months	3.1250%	3.2500%	3.3750%	3.4375%
3 months	3.2500%	3.3750%	3.4375%	3.5000%
6 months	3.3750%	3.4375%	3.5000%	3.6250%
12 months	3.4375%	3.5000%	3.6250%	3.7500%

Open an account now at any PSBank branch nationwide

PSBank US Dollar TIME DEPOSIT

READERS' FAQs /C3

LIFESTYLE

Liza Dela Rosa-Formoso

MONDAY ARTS & BOOKS • TUESDAY FITNESS • WEDNESDAY 2BU • THURSDAY FOOD • FRIDAY FASHION & BEAUTY

Spirituality affects physical health

WELL AND GOOD

Tina Jison

THE WORLD'S BEST doctor and healer is none other than your friendly person possesses an innate healing force. Good health is our natural birthright, and the power to be in good health and to enjoy life to the full lies within us. "Master of... Series than any pill or scientific advancement is the understanding of the power of knowledge, faith, love and action. Holistic health care means taking full responsibility of your whole being."

These lines are from the first chapter of "A Gift of Health" by Maricandy A. Fritzie. I spent a lovely afternoon with her a few weeks ago chatting about the principles that have guided her work in the field of holistic well-being for more than 12 years.

Her book, launched recently, is a compilation of her holistic health studies and practices that go way back to 1999 when she opened Andyvarey Holistic Health Center in Bf Homes, Parañaque.

Since then she has gotten a master's degree in Education Guidance and Counseling and taken further studies in Swedish Nutrition and Holistic Health Consultancy.

Law of nature

She defines holistic health as a law of nature, the whole is made up of interdependent parts. She writes, "The earth is made up of different systems like air, land, water, plants and animals. In order to sustain life, these cannot be separated because what happens in one system has an effect on the rest.

"Similarly, an individual is a whole made up of interdependent parts: physical, mental + emotional + spirituality, and financial. When one part is not working perfectly, the others are affected. In addition, you, as a whole person, are in constant interaction with your environment. Which is why one can have a migraine or an upset stomach due to anxiety over a job interview."

Many people have written about the importance of exercise, nutrition ("chemical" is low term for nutrition) and stress management to physical health. But daily life can make these low spirituality (or lack of it) can affect your health.

She explains, "Being spiritually healthy means being intimately connected with your spouse, partner, family, friends, and community—a connection that gives you innate joy and satisfaction. Through a harmonious relationship with people in your life, you learn to give and receive unconditional love."

Guilt is unhealthy

And philandering husbands, be careful. Your extramarital activities could be the source of your health problems. Andy writes, "A mixed filled with guilt, fear or negative feelings is discarded and can affect all the physiological and biological processes of the body.

"For example, a married man engaged in an illicit affair learns to hide things from his wife and family. The fear of being caught haunts him and brings about negative stress on the body.

"Fear immobilizes the bodily acids that can lower the immune system. Exposure to such constant stress will take its toll on the body, while living a clean and righteous life helps the body processes work smoothly, helping it heal on its own."

Andy points out that self-centeredness and egotism can lead to daily stress and constant state of "fight or flight" because of the situations to protect one's selfish interests.

She says, "What usually disrupts one's 'feel good' state is discord among family members, friends or colleagues. Conflict brings chaos and loads of negative feelings that may have psychosomatic manifestations."

Scientific proof

Preliminary scientific research has validated Andy's belief that physical health is affected by spiritual health. According to Dr. Harvard Women's Health Watch, mentally meeting a group before your muscles sense and your blood pressure rise. Meanwhile, a study found that people who participate those who belonged from experienced improvements in blood pressure and heart rate and decreased workload on the heart.

Another study suggests that people with negative personalities and a chronic desire to weak are might have a higher risk of dying early due to cardiovascular problems.

In her book, Andy lists some "exercises" to improve your "spiritual fitness":

"Find time to think about all the things you have to be grateful for in life. Being grateful to God for what you have, instead of worrying about what you lack, enables you to let go of negative thoughts and attitudes.

"People who pray report a greater sense of well-being than those who do not. Choose the form of prayer that you feel comfortable with then establish a schedule for daily prayer. If you are a Christian, pray the 'Our Father' the moment you wake up. Saying this prayer dislodges negative feelings because your mind is focused on a powerful source and not just on your problems.

"Another practice that radiates energy is blessing people...even those you do not know. When you have someone on the family planner, just say silently, 'I bless you for the goodness of God that is working with you and in you.' Your blessing will help list day and lighten his load."

Note: "A Gift of Health" is available at *National Bookstore and Powerbooks*. Call 8070402.// mail maricandy55@yahoo.com.

Visit www.mindpowerfitness.ph

Your new home is closer than you think.

ROCK-BOTTOM RATES!

Fixing Period	Interest Rate*	Monthly Amortization**
1-year	10.25%	P 8,817
2-year	11.00%	P10,322
3-year	11.25%	P10,493
5-year	11.50%	P10,665

*Rates quite low for new fund takeout when current 3 month Int., combination or refinancing. Rates are subject to change without prior notice.

**For every loan amount of P1,000,000 with a 20-year loan term.

Call 845-27-57 or text PSBANK HOME for more rates quotation and to refer your friends and family. Log on to PSBank Online and go to 101 FX to book an appointment with the Home Loan Center.

Apply at any PSBank branch nationwide.

PSBank Home Loans

EXERCISE OF THE WEEK

Balanced hamstring curl

STRENGTHENS THE buttocks, back of the thighs (hamstrings) and back of the shoulders (rear deltoids). The abdominal and lower back muscles are also strengthened as stabilizers. This is also a good exercise for balance.

Equipment:
Exercise mat
Exercise technique:

1. Kneel on hands and knees.

2. Knees should be directly under hips, and arms directly under shoulder joint. Keep your legs slightly apart for balance.

3. Keep your abdominal and lower back muscles tight throughout the exercise.

4. Your head should be kept in line with your spine. Do not allow the head to hang down or elevate in any way.

5. Lift and straighten the opposite arm and leg (example: right arm and left leg). Hold the arm and leg at hip level. Bend your knee and elbow. Straighten again.

6. Repeat the bending and straightening 12 times before switching to the other side. This makes one set.

Performance tips:

1. Make sure both shoulders and hips are facing the floor throughout the exercise. Avoid leaning to one side.

2. Imagine a stick balanced along your spine...do not let it fall.

3. Keep squeezing your buttocks to keep your leg held at hip level.

Repetitions:

Do one set of 12 repetitions on each side.

Filipino women's hidden pain

(Part I)

OVER THE PAST 15 YEARS, A HUSBAND of women have come to me for advice on all sorts of problems.

However, I observed that no matter what their educational attainment or social status was, they had only three main concerns. The first was relationships; the second, relationships; and the third, relationships! Other problems paled in comparison to these three.

Although it may be true that, inside Philippine laws, Filipino women are accorded the same rights and opportunities as men, strike close to some taboo-creations, they primarily suffer deep-seated emotional pain because of the machismo mentality and double standard of morality of the average Filipino man.

Double standard

A brilliant German atomic energy scientist who had worked as consultant in the Philippines told me, "I have observed that, in your country, the women are not given much freedom to relate with other individuals, especially with the opposite sex, after they are married, yet this is not the case with your men. They can go out with whomever they want."

Beatrix (not her customary) was an attractive and highly intelligent 35-year-old manager of a large financial corporation in Metro Manila. She had two lovely daughters. Ever since she got married 18 years ago, she had never gone out, even in a group, with other people except with close relatives.

Her businessman husband was so possessive and jealous he would not even let her step out of the house after 6 p.m. She was expected to be at home to attend to her family after office hours. If she came home later than 6 p.m. she had to account for her whereabouts, other wise there would be a big discussion with her husband, which she would rather avoid.

Throughout her married life, Bo had accepted this state of affairs without complaint. She did whatever her husband wanted her to do without question. Although she appeared to others to be a happily married woman, she was suffering silently though she would not admit this to herself. She was constantly in denial.

Silent rebellion

Without her realizing it, Pat's physical body was already rebelling against this unhealthy and unnatural relationship. For one thing, she never enjoyed sex with her husband. She did it only out of a sense of marital duty. She never experienced orgasm like normal women. She was a virgin when she got married and had never had any sexual experience with another man beyond kissing.

Although her body ached for that ultimate passionate pleasure, her mind had learned to suppress it. Soon she developed "endometriosis," a painful ailment where uterine tissues, for no unknown reasons, escaped from the uterus and landed in other areas, such as the ovaries and elsewhere.

But there was one area in Pat's body that neither her husband nor society could control—her imagination. And this was where Pat expressed her real sexual and feminine self. When we had become close friends, I asked Pat what her wildest sexual fantasies were. What she described to me, between giggles, would make Sharon Hollander, Linda Lovelace and Margie Holmes look like amateurs.

Not so free

The case of Patricia may be a bit extreme, given the more liberal social climate we now have to conduct our day-to-day lives. However, it is not really far from the experiences of many Filipino women. They are still not so free to socialize with whomever they want, especially the opposite sex. Society always assumes something immoral is going on if they do that.

This is quite a contrast to what I witnessed in Europe, which made me realize the pathological or neurotic nature of most married relationships we have in this country. Let me relate this incredible story from the beginning.

In 1979, I met in Manila a 45-year-old German nuclear scientist whom we shall call Rudolf, and his beautiful 35-year-old French partner named Michelle, who had an 8-year-old son by a previous marriage. They lived in Grenoble, South of France. Rudolf sought me out because he had read a pamphlet I had written about Philippine herbal medicine and a cyst in the breast that she didn't want to be operated on through conventional means. I introduced them to several psychic healers, but her treatment was not completed because Rudolf had to go back to France.

Note: Pampanga residents interested in "Sinaunang Karunungan at Kabuhayan" continue to be held Feb. 11 at Illinois, Clarkfield, Angeles City; contact Rita Lim at (0917) 8908945.

INNER AWAKENESS
Jaime T. Licauco

ON FEB. 11, the northbound lane of Roxas Boulevard will be closed to 8 a.m., while the southbound lane will be closed by 5 p.m.

Traffic rerouted for annual love fest

CLODUALDO QUIMBO-DOZA 2000, the country's biggest and grandest Valentine celebration, will be held simultaneously Feb. 11 in four venues—Roxas Boulevard, Bay walk, Manila Ocean Park, Macapagal Boulevard, Pasay City; Pampanga, Pili Ayala Business Park, Clark, and Marina Town Square, Davao.

ChanUp brand manager Rona Fernandez said they expected this year's Loveplosion to be grander, more romantic, and more exciting.

To ensure the safety and comfort of participants, Chanlyn is doubling its security tab from, adding to some 1,000 personnel from the Philippine National Police and the City of Manila with the help of Mayor Lito Atienza.

Security forces by Special Weapons and Tactics team will be conducted. Bombers and explosive-sniffing personnel will also patrol the area to prevent any untoward occurrences.

Paramedics, ambulances and fire trucks will be on standby and an emergency security desk will be set up at the Rajah Sulayman Park starting 8:00 AM.

On Feb. 11, the northbound lane of Roxas Boulevard will be closed at 9 a.m., while the southbound lane will be closed by 5 p.m.

Fernandez said Loveplosion was a venue for people to enjoy valentine love, and hate this.

MAGICAL GREEN TEA
Fruit Magic has launched Magic Shots, a new way to enjoy the benefits of green tea. The new product from the United States comes in the form of liquid tea that concentrates made from green tea extracts. Alan Escalona, CEO of Fruit Magic, says this allows people to gain the benefits of Green Tea in its concentrated form. The new product comes in five blends: Energy, Fat Burner, Memory, Immunity and Blood Sugar Management. Magic Shots is now available in all Fruit Magic stores nationwide. Call 3648727, 3645431, fax 3642934 or visit www.fruitmagic.com.ph.

Fundraiser for PGH patients

THE PHILIPPINE GENERAL HOSPITAL Medical Foundation Inc. (PGHMF) is holding the "Strong at Aart para sa PGH" charity event, Feb. 9, 6:30 p.m., at the Blue Lounge of the Manila Polo Club.

The fund drive will support the foundation's efforts to provide free medicines and medical supplies to PGH indigent patients and its "Adopt a Charity Ward" project.

Highlight of the event is the auction of artworks by foremost Filipino artists including Napoleon Abueva, Augusto Alfon, Manuel Baldemor, Lee Carreon, Arturo Cavestany, Arturo Luz, Romulo Olazo, Prince Albert in front Ester Cox, Nadine's in Pensacola, and Tito Boco in Mandaluyo as well as the latest designer gowns and others.

Spearheading the event are PGHMF president Dr. Greg Alvior, chair Lolita Escobar-Miquel, vice chair Jenny Zamora, and Cory Quirino, overall chair for the "Stay in PGH" fund campaign.

The event is sponsored by American Express Card, Merck Sharp & Dohme, Zuellig Pharmaceuticals, Filipino Star Printing and BMPI.

Call the PGHMF at 5562874 or 5216456 local 2061.

Pro-life training seminar Feb. 17

TWO INTERNATIONAL speakers are featured during the Pro-Life Philippines' Training Seminar on Feb. 17.

The seminar on "Post-Abortion Recovery & Healing" is part of the Pro-Life Month observance this February.

Molly White and Denis Mazurenay are both involved in healing and counseling men and women for post-abortive trauma. White is executive director of Living the Redeemed Life Ministry-Usa, while Mazurenay is founder/president of Canada Silent No More.

Other international guests are Karen Bodle, Michelle Ogrodnik and Lorna Sedenberg. They will talk about the issue of abortion and share own experiences.

Also lined up for Pro-Life March are the 12th National Convention on Feb. 11, the Woman Choose Life and Adoption with pro-life companion on Feb. 15, launch of Novena for Life 200 organization of nurses and nursing students) on Feb. 16, and a prayer conference to combat the havoc of evil.

PHILLY White

Services abortion on Feb. 20.

Pro-Life Philippines, a non-profit, non-stock organization, offers programs and services that include pregnancy counseling centers, seminars and promotion organizing, to-remove education and training programs such as Basic Pro-life Orientation Seminar, Teen Sexuality Training Workshop, Pro-Life Lecture Series and the Pro-Life Intensive Faculty Education (Pro-LIFE) Course.

Call 4217347 or 9112911. Visit www.prolife.org.ph.

Blending essential oils for love and romance

Workshop on making of massage, essential oils

SPA PROFESSIONALS IN MAKING (PI) first practical Make Your Own Aromatherapy Workshop on Feb. 11 at the swimming pool along Tom Service Road in Forest, Mandaluyong.

The workshop, designed for individuals and spa owners, will teach members-only the use of scents from natural products to promote health and beauty.

It will include a short lecture and hands-on making of facial products, massage oils, linen sprays, body scrubs and bath care products.

Those entering a unique gift for Valentine's Day can learn to blend their own massage oil, linen spray or essential oil blend to liven up the day of lovers.

The will ensure the products they are giving away are free of artificial preservatives and colorings. The oils can be customized to suit the recipient's or the maker's own needs. Making them is also more fun and much cheaper.

The first workshop will focus on essential oils to celebrate love and romance.

Future workshops will be held on the second Saturday of every month. The courses will be conducted by a qualified pharmacist and aromatherapist and is offered in conjunction with Spa Essentials (www.spaessentials.com.ph).

Spa Professionals (www.spaprofessionals.net) is the only internationally accredited (CIDESCO) spa school in the Philippines. Call 8382167 or e-mail info@spaprofessionals.net.

International award for Filipino doctor

FILIPINO PROFESSOR FELICIDAD Cua Lim, MD, is the first Asian recipient of the Outstanding Clinician award conferred by the World Allergy Organization (WAO).

The award was presented to the recent World Allergy Congress in Helsinki, Germany.

Dr. Cua Lim had also received the Grand Achievement Award in Medicine and Allied Sciences at the Asia Pacific Excellence Awards in 2005.

In 2002, she was named Most Distinguished Fellow by the Philippine College of Physicians and also received the Most Outstanding Physician Award of the Philippine Society of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology (PSAAI), conferred by the Philippine Medical Association. In 2000, she was awarded the Most Distinguished Allergist by PSAAI. She became the first Filipino and Asian, in 2000, to be named Honorary International Distinguished Fellow by the American College of Allergy and Immunology. In 1994, she was the Philippine Professional Regulation Commission's Physician of the Year.

Answers to questions that matter most to you

INSIDE OUT

Gay Quirino

WE GIVE WAY TO frequently asked questions. Answers to your deepest concerns can lead to greater well-being.

Is chocolate bad for health and your waistline?

Chocolate is not bad at all. In fact, it has health benefits. David Benton, Ph.D., of the University of Wales-Swansea proved in a study that chocolate improved people's mood.

When given chocolate, the mood of depressed students improved. Apart from preventing disturbing sugar and fat that nourish the mind and release endorphins, chocolate contains chemicals, including phenylethylamine, that stimulate the central nervous system.

The good feeling created by chocolate may be the reason it is considered addictive. As with anything, moderation is the key. One can overdo the sweets and regret the effect on the waistline.

Can alcohol damage the brain?

Alcohol is a brain-buster if taken in excess. Heavy drinking of alcohol (10 or more drinks per week) can kill brain cells, eventually leading to brain atrophy, a decline in one's cognitive abilities and functions, and possibly dementia.

Even if one does not drink daily (not linger once or twice weekly) it can overload the brain too soon, too much, too fast and eventually trigger strokes. Drunk in moderation (1 glass daily), alcohol does have an anti-inflammatory effect and boosts HDL (high-density lipoprotein known as the "good" cholesterol because a high level of it seems to protect against heart attack).

If you drink, drink one red wine for health. It contains antioxidants (polyphenols) that can prevent brain damage to the brain caused by oxygen-free radicals and from strokes, as well as stimulate estrogen production.

Alcohol can trigger migraine response in (postmenopausal women: red wine, in 92 percent of women; bourbon, 65 percent; beer/white wine, 77 percent). But did you know that the body can also get a lot of beneficial antioxidants from grape juice, not from the alcohol? Grape juice has resveratrol, a chemical in the skin of grapes that helps blood circulation and fights fungus.

What is the best slimming diet?

Jokingly, the best diet of all is to "zip your mouth." The trend is eat more than we should. Try these approaches:

• Less is more.—Eat less of every thing at meal time. Example: If your usual is a plateful of food, cut it down in half. If you envisage one cup of rice per meal, make it a half cup.

• Unli 'ot Buf.—Consume five servings of vegetables and fruits daily. If you want to lose weight, increase your intake to 10 a day. Eat the vegetables/fruits, preferably raw, before anything else so little room is left for anything else.

• Hydration.—Have just a little bit of everything. In short, to succeed servings of any kind of food except veggies and fruits.

Fasting—It isn't a diet, but a cleansing regimen.

Where your emotions overload your brain and your worries burden the mind, your health is bound to be affected. The connection is real and undeniable.

The time you realize you are stressed is the time your healing begins. Confession is the first step.

• Try to eliminate or avoid stressors from your life (i.e., obviously you can't do anything about traffic, taxes, but you can do something about the way you look at them). The key is your response—negative or positive, relaxed or panicked, hateful or loving. Choose the path of non-stressors.

• Listen to relaxing music.

• Get active or physical. If you are depressed, get exercise clothes/shoes and hit the road. Walk your blues away.

Don't use the opportunities to get up each day and run to the bathroom mirror. Smile at yourself and say, "You are great!" By projecting yourself, you are already programming your mind and emotion.

• Listen to or sing an inspirational/spiritual/praise song.

• Practice slow, deep breathing quietly for 5 minutes.

• Pray. Meditate.

• Jump 10 times to get your circulation going and your lymph moving.

What is the secret of beautiful skin?

The state of your skin is the result of many factors:

• Balanced diet rich in veggies/fruits

• Exercise—daily walking (if possible)

• Enough sleep—6-8 hours

• Avoidance of the sun (wear sunblock SPF 20-30 or above) or sunbathing

• Happy disposition

• Supplements—daily multi-vitamin/mineral tablet/capsule, extra dosage of Biotin Cor antioxidant regimen (A, C, E, selenium)

• Monthly cleaning in a dermatologist's clinic

• Religiously following the three-step skin care: clean, tone, moisturize.

Love and light

Reference: "Your Miracle Brain," by Jean Carper

Note: Join me on beauty and wellness day, Feb. 20, 11 a.m.-1 p.m., IM Mammiff, with *JOHN Boshe Parrel* and *Simon*. Call 4168840 or 4152572.

Listen to "Me Jhanay Be Me Jhan," *Bollywood* 606, 6:15 p.m., *Friday*; "The Canal (@)," *Studio 23*, 10 a.m., *Sunday*.

TWEETIE de Leon-Gonzalez, who pursues healthy living and an active lifestyle both for her and her family, has been named endorser of the "Choose Wellness, Choose Meds!" advocacy campaign of Merck Philippines.

Tweetie promotes wellness

TWEETIE DE LEON-GONZALEZ has been named the newest celebrity endorser of "Choose Wellness, Choose Meds!."

The advocacy, first launched in March 2005 as "Let's Talk Wellness" by Merck Philippines, seeks to build awareness of current knowledge and lifestyle practices promoting wellness, "the state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease," according to the World Health Organization.

Gonzalez, mother of four kids ranging in age from 1 to 9, says ensuring her family's wellness is a very important part of her role as a wife and mother. She tries to cut on synthetic in feeding an active lifestyle. Though she doesn't go to the gym as much as before, she plays squash three times a week and does fitness routines like abdominal exercises and yoga, either in the gym or at home.

Husband Mat, a businessman, plays basketball and also frequents the gym while two sons are moderate to underweight. The Gonzalez family also plays badminton as much as they can.

Although Gonzalez eats almost everything, she makes sure she has vegetables with every meal. She encourages her children to eat vegetables and also sees to it that they drink milk everyday.

Gonzalez says praying regularly helps her handle stress. She also goes for relaxing massages, lighting candles and listening to music, as well as simple pleasures like reading a yummy chosen.

But her biggest pleasure is being with her kids, spending as much time as possible with each one of them.

12 wise words for 2006

LEARN SOME wise things words for 2006 from the first issue of Healthy Options News Digest (January-February).

The magazine offers 12 positive prescriptions for each month—revive, research, relax, relocate, rewind, reflect, refill, refocus, relish, inspire, recharge and refresh.

People should try to live in the present. Being too focused on the future keeps them from living more of their lives today.

The special report, "Can You Be Fit and Healthy?," says people who eat right and work out should not be worried if they can't fit into their jeans. It's not the right time to the scale or the size of the pants that they should worry about but elevated blood pressure and cholesterol.

"Ask The Experts" gives tips on how to combat the effects of aging, maintain the right hair, foods and supplements.

In "Cancer Myths," 10 cancer myths about cancer while "The Dragon of Chronic Diseases" discusses the health effects of the condition.

Other features include "Holistic Dentistry," "Sacred Spaces," and "Everyone to the Pool."

The new Healthy Options News Digest is offered free in the Greater Cebu City area, priced Rico 500 City Hearth Edge, Level 2 of SM Manila and SM Pampanga, Greenbelt, Ayala Center, Makati City; Level 2 of SM Megamall B, Edsa Shangrila, Mandaluyong City. Visit www.healthyoptions.com.ph.

MEDICard, The Healthcare I Deserve!

Take Charge Doc!

IAME offers P2.8 million scholarships

The International Academy of Management and Economics (IAME) (rye-ame)), the alternative school to UP, Ateneo and La Salle has opened scholarships worth P2.8 million to high school valedictorians, salutatorians, and other honor graduates for the June 2006 opening of classes.

Non-honor graduates may qualify by scoring 85% in the entrance examination. Early bird enrollees will be given 20% discount at tuition fees.

IAME is noted for its global affiliations with foreign schools such as Hamborough University, England; University of California Berkeley, USA; Iowa International University, USA; University of Business & Finance, Switzerland; University of Southern Queensland, Australia; Australian Institute of Management and Science, Australia; University of London, U.K.; Swiss Management Academy, Switzerland; Gibraltar Business School, Australia; Australia Entrepreneurship Institute; Australia Tourism Institute; and

Be in the *First Class* Class

At par with U.P., Ateneo and La Salle

Rolling Admission for January to February 2006

Start the year 2006 by resuming your education

Ph.D. MBA BSBA

Management
Political Economy

Management
Political Economy

Management
Marketing
Finance & Investment / Banking
HRD

Log on: www.iame.edu.ph
E-mail: teching@iame.edu.ph
Direct Line: 8963 3158
Other Lines: 7372688 or 09 loc. 12
Text or Call: 0918-2141318
Or visit us at Ayala Avenue Extension (new left of), 1861 Metropolitan Avenue Makati City 1209

IAME International Academy of Management and Economics

GOLD medalist Mahlael Mendoza and Arnisael Ocampo

JAN and Nene Lozano

MAESTEE Reyes and Vilma Valera

FORMER Quezon City Mayor Mel Mathay, Jocelyn Pavia, Didi Manarang, Ruley Co, Vivian Uy and Tessie Lacuesta

FORTUNE Ludovina, Margaret Lim Kwok, Kevin Kwok, Nina and husband Alex Linares

KAREN Francisco, gold medalist Belinda Adoro, Dr. Belen Cariaso and silver medalist Emmanuel Reyes

SHAMMAH Music party people. Madeleine Lim, Pierre Lim, birthday girl Margaret Lim Kwok, PL Lim, Nene Casimiro, Nelia Bengzon and Dr. Belen Cariaso

Swinging birthday bash for dancing lady

AIMPLE OF BEAUTIES Jenny Rosello, Raye Quintos, Jacky Lord Andreou, Tarah Helena and Marina Marrero

CECILLE Cuerva and Tita Cruz

KATHY Moya and Sally Yatco Tsai

WE PARTY, TOO. Former Cavanaleen/Vice Gov. Teodoro Morales and fiancé Jose Sen. Bong Revilla

DINGDONG Dantes and Mayor Ding Guerrero

EYE-CATCHERS. Young Marc, Yulia Shevtsova, Jr. Cherino, Carol and Mat de Guzman

CHAIC Tuason, Antonio Navarro, Ruby Ramper, birthday boy Lee V and Pinky Amador

THRILL-SEEKING VERACRUZ AND his filmgazer Lim Kwok had a smashing, swinging birthday bash with her close pals.

It started with an excellent dinner at the mansion's China Bistro, jukeboxes, spots which Margaret LK's super fun dancing group dashed over to the swinging Savannah's Music to shake off all the calories the ladies stuffed themselves with.

OLY Games gold and silver medalists in Latin American dance Michael Mendoza and Belinda Adoro, and standard dance Emmanuel Reyes and Maria Rosario showed their awesome championship skills.

They were followed by other life-champions like Miguel de la Serna and Angeles Cristian, Amanda Dumpit and Ramon Fernandez, and Byron Sugia and Jean.

Highlights of the birthday bash was Margaret LK's fantastic live number with her partner, Armand Ocampo, followed by her close chum pal, Dr. Belen Cariaso and Gilford Gatdaytan.

Then, later than you could bat an eyelash, it was time to roll and rock the dance floor with the whole dinner bunch shaking and rolling till way past midnight.

Cool celebrator Margaret Lim Kwok definitely knows what a swinging party is all about...swingers.

Mr. Charmer's bash

Yes, last gala hosted it to Mr. Charmer himself, the well-respected Cagayan business governor, Leandro "Leo" Antonio B. Aguinaldo. When he calls, they all come as they did when he threw a super bash for his birthday at the chic, upscale Circus Bar in Glorietta 2, Ayala Center.

The place was jam-packed with over 200 celebs and assorted hotshot multi-millionaires, ranging from Luci relatives, his government and business associates, to beautiful faces in the party-going scene of Makati's clubbing strip.

Since it was the hottest ticket of the week, hostess made it a point to be there, circulating endlessly in the eye-catching smoking area outside and the ala-chic interiors of Circus. Although she couldn't believe the crowd that was there. But perhaps it was really no surprise as stellar turnouts, as early as a week before, were already input tackled as invitations were "tested" to just about everyone who wanted to help Leo make his special day a memorable one.

Among the hostess were stunningly gorgeous, drop-dead beauties like Jenny Gaudiz, Raye Quintos, JL Dominic, Liz Tee, Cecille Cuerva, Yulia Shevtsova, Yin Cruz, Jen Simmonds, Yuhu Alfang, Kid Sison and brilliant Pinky Amador, who had all the guys going gaga. Actor-director, a couple of mega businessmen tried but hit a brick wall when they tried to attract some of the gals mesmerized above. Pity!

With hostess posting till way past 1 a.m., palengues, beautiful women, lavished luxurious and politicians, plus the chic pads of partying night owls, made the hands of the motivated character Gov. Leandro Aguinaldo is a smashing success.

WITHOUT BATTING AN EYELASH
Maurice Arcache
Photos by Allen Vera Hagerty
using Kodak Easy Share

Launching

The Ayala group turned it all, palengues, into the 200 - Strong bar just launched the first-ever awesome beau theater at the grand Shangri-La Hotel ballroom.

Located at 66th flagship Mall of Asia, the ever-candy 6,500-square-foot beauty of a colossal movie screen, as tall as an eight-story building, and is, take note, palengues, the largest in this and one of the largest in the world.

Still convinced that we, movie freaks, will see films like we've never seen them before. Imax is "a Canadian-based technology that utilizes film (10g-bits) 15 times larger than conventional film, delivers the most crisp and life-like images ever seen, with a digital surround system that enhances cinematic sound to levels never before heard," excitedly explained to me by young PR whiz GP Reyes.

I am told blockbuster movies and education documentaries have already been converted into Imax's awesome format, palengues.

We were welcomed by the brilliant, loveable Ty tandem, super financier Hans Ty and his sister, incredibly intelligent female SP-Executive Tina SM Prime Holdings, together with Ben Sarmiento and Jim Pederson of Imax Corp., as we lounged in. After a yummy dinner and straight to the point speeches from Don Sumit and them Ty, we were treated to a spectacular first screen presentation showing to Imax's super stunning capabilities.

As we left, everyone agreed, dahlings, that we can't wait to enjoy the exhilarating, awesome experience.

THE FABULOUS Bacomfelds band, definitely a Beatles' reincarnation, had us rocking the dance floor.

MVP group: Jamie Stevens, Jose Estrella, Company Tuna's Lee Po, PR artist GP Reyes, Collins Madamba and Carl Ty

HOT SHOTS. Imax's VP for Asia-Pacific Don Savant and Jim Patterson, with SM's Hans Ty and Bo Camalig

BEAUTIES AND CELEBRATOR. Jane Kennedy-Lee, Cec Lee Stevens, Mark Powers (second from right), JL Dominic Jolkara and Liz Go

CHILLING at Circus. Former Board Member Jun Puyat, Mayor Bong Teves, PMP provincial director Francis Peñaflor, Makati police chief Marieto Nitorio

CHRIS Pedrosa, Louie Fernandez and the hot Circus Bar, Yuhu Alfang and Zandi Rodriguez

KAT Sison

LADY VISE Jules Sacris and Pia Bautista III

MARGIT Lim